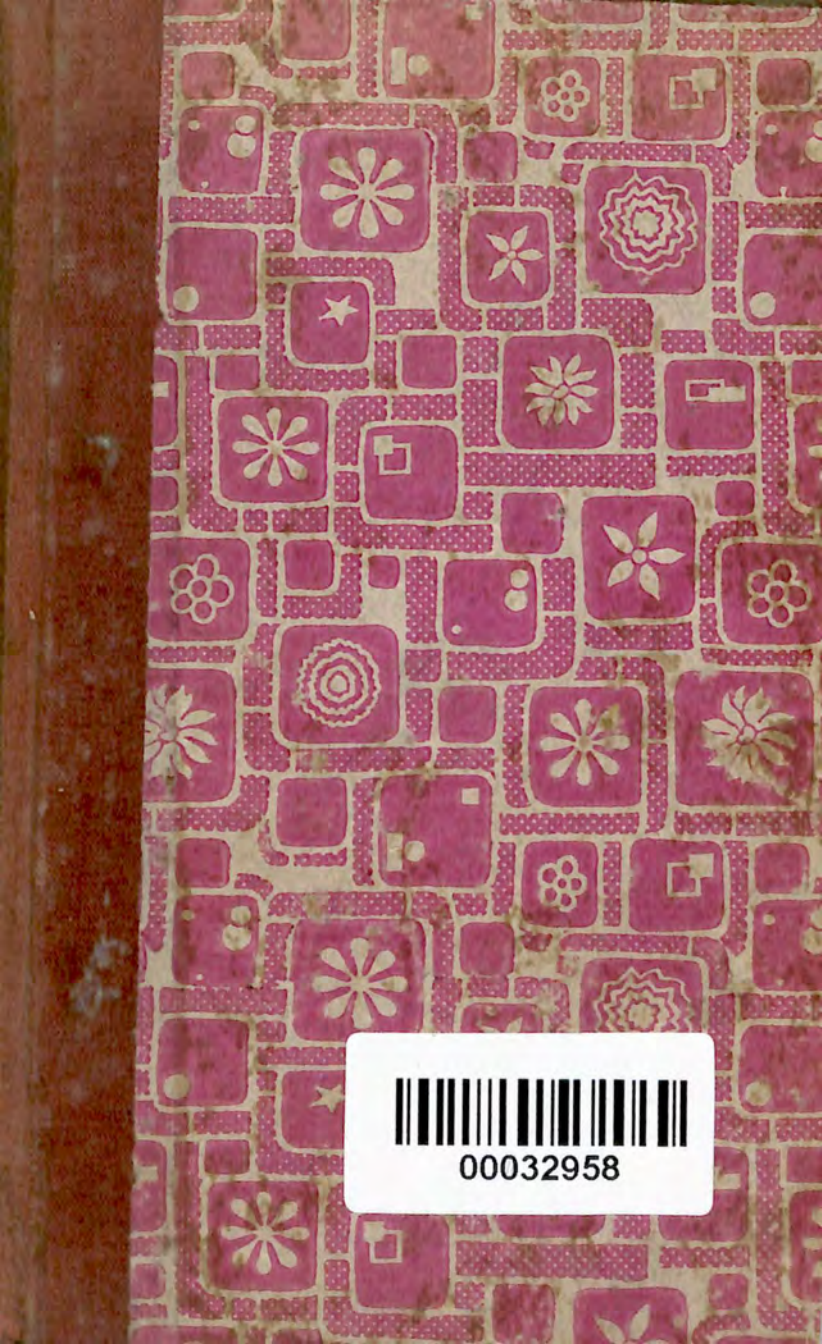
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RUSSIAN STATE BALL.

SIX YEARS' TRAVELS IN RUSSIA.

BY

AN ENGLISH LADY.

32958

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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To the great Yaroslav, Russia owes her first code of laws, and her first written edition of the Scriptures. He caused all the laws made by his predecessors to be collected, and added several new ones. The book in which they are contained is called "Rooskaya Pravda," or, Russian Truth, a copy of which may be seen among the ancient records at St. Petersburg. He also ordered a translation of the Holy Scriptures from the Greek into the "Sla-

vensky Yazikee," or language of the Slavenæ, in which he himself assisted. This was about 1046. This great man was, moreover, Prince of all Russia, with the exception of Tmootarakan—Taman, on the shores of the sea of Azoff, which, together with the lands of the Tchornie-morski Kozaki—Black Sea Kossacks whom he had subdued—belonged to his only brother, Mistislav.

But to return to the spot whereon once stood the palace of this famous monarch, for there lived three blooming graces—or three lovely "flowers," as the Russian authoress calls them—Prince Yaroslav's daughters, viz., Elizabeth, Anne, and Anastasia, concerning the eldest of whom a love-story is told that is familiar to every Russian maiden who can read.

The strength of frail woman's devotion is old as the world itself, and in this remote palace, on the banks of the Volkoff, lived one of the noblest devotees to the universal sympathy of life.

Of the three lovely daughters of Yaroslav, Elizavetta, or Elizabeth, the eldest, was the most attractive. The fame of her beauty and goodness had spread abroad, and many neighbouring kings sought her hand, but to all she shook her head. About this time, Henry I. of France, desiring an alliance with young Russia, sent to demand Yaroslav's eldest daughter as his Queen. Elizavetta, however, turned a deaf ear to all the allure-

ments and splendours of the future awaiting a Queen of France. Yaroslav had set his heart upon this alliance, and with all the weight of a father's persuasion urged his beautiful daughter to accept the proposal of Henry. The power of parents over their children was in those days omnipotent; yet Elizabeth, with true Novgorodian spirit, rebelled against the outrageous disposal of her hand without the consent of her heart, and, shutting herself up, she refused either food or comfort.

Yaroslav's kind heart relented. Touched at the sight of his favourite daughter's declining health, he urged her no more, but, assenting to her suggestions, gave one of her sisters to the King of France, and the other to the importunate King of Hungary—who was also a suitor for Elizabeth—leaving the determined beauty in peace to commune with her own heart, long since dedicated to one earthly idol, of whom she thought by day and dreamt by night, but of whom she never spoke a word.

Some years previously, a young Prince of Sweden visited the court of Yaroslav, to seek service in his army. To see Elizavetta was to love her, and this the Prince had no sooner done, than he found himself "over head and ears" in the fever of the "*grande passion.*"

Driven to extremities by the violence of the

attack, he presented himself before Yaroslav and popped the momentous question. The sage Prince smiled. The age of chivalry had already dawned in Europe, and Yaroslav, one of Nature's own true knights, and moreover a prudent father, informed his daughter's fiery admirer that none should have her to wife but he who had performed some worthy deed of arms, and recommended him to set out in the world and seek adventure.

Elizavetta, meanwhile, had never spoken a word to the young Swede. They seldom met, for women were closely shut up in those days, and when they did, the Princess shunned him, true type of that erring mortal, whose incongruities on the subject Schiller thus describes:

> Shy as before the hunter's horn, the doe
> All trembling moves,
> She flies from man as from a foe,
> And hates before she loves.

Off set poor Garold to Constantinople, bemoaning his hard fate, and, like all woe-begones under similar circumstances, composed verses to his adored as he went. Some of these have been translated from the Swedish into Russ, and the following is something like their meaning in our Anglo-Saxon. The following effusion appears to be an epitome of his life previous to visiting the Court of Yaroslav, but whether the feats therein re-

counted were scarcely chivalric enough for the prince of Novgorod; or whether Yaroslav was desirous of trying the fidelity of the Prince, or whether the youth, with that modesty peculiar to the epidemic under which he laboured, kept all these fine achievements to himself, only breathing them to the winds and the stars, far from the cherished object of his aspirations, the story tells not; but one feels half inclined to be angry with Yaroslav for sending him away. At this stage of the affair, Garold was ignorant of the impression he had made in the breast of Elizabeth.

SONG OF GAROLD TO THE RUSSIAN LADY.

Comrades! how we flew o'er the surging deep,
Leaving the land of our fathers far behind us,
On sea and on land how often we've fought,
And on both we have triumphed;
Ah, comrades! did not our hearts burn within us,
As on we flew, like a flock of gay birds,
And in our ships surrounded our enemies,
—The rich people of Scanskoë*—as with a wall.
But the Russian lady despises Garold.

Comrades! my youth was not passed in idleness.
You remember that war with the sons of Drontheim?
How with the speed of the strong wind I flew before you
Heedless of stones or clouds of whistling arrows,
Which fell like hail around us;
In vain the foe stood close, in vain their spears
Rattled against our shields; for like the pale wheat-ears
Before the down-pouring deluge they fell—both man and horse.
But the Russian lady despises Garold.

* Probably Scandia, an island beyond the Orkneys.

And once, I well remember, we were three in a small boat,
When the angry waves rose like hills around us;
Black night, with roaring thunder, appeared at noon,
And red Hecla stood mirror'd in the murky waters;
In vain the furious sea dashed wildly against us,
For with my helmet I baled it out, and plied well the oar.
Beloved comrades, with Garold ye knew not fear,
For he brought you safe to the peaceful haven.
But the Russian lady despises Garold.

Comrades! how oft have you seen me,
While seated on the back of my war-steed,
Batter down the fortified wall with my battle-axe!
How oft have I rushed through the hot ashes
Of a furious fire, on my impetuous steed of the desert!
How oft have I swam through the thick cold fog,
And drove on the hollow-sounding ice,
Like a proud swan floating on the waters!
But the Russian lady despises Garold.

Amid the peaceful valleys I was born,
Where the snow lay deep. But early I left
That cherished home, armed with the potent bow and arrow.
Deep we plunged into the din of battle.
I have plucked you from your homes, my comrades,
But it is not in vain that we entered our strong ships,
To seek for glory far from our Fatherland,
Nor in vain that with shield and lance we have braved the foe.
But the Russian lady despises Garold.

Garold, it appears, was very kindly received by the Emperor of Greece, to whom he carried greeting from Yaroslav; and under the Greek flag he achieved considerable renown. He visited

Sicily and Africa, fought against the Moors, and wound up by a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, returning to the court of Yaroslav laden with honours —chivalric enough to please even the Prince of Novgorod—and claimed his bride, learning now, for the first time, the strength of Elizavetta's enduring attachment.

Soon after, there was a gay wedding at the palace of Yaroslav, and the good father gave the hand of his faithful daughter to him who had so long retained her heart. Subsequently Garold succeeded to the throne of his father, and the beautiful Elizavetta became Queen of Sweden.

CHAPTER II.

Monastery of Verlama—Derjaëvin's Grave—Bronitzee—Covered Bridge—Valdaë—Lake—The Patriarch and the Demons—Beautiful Bells and Brazen Belles—Interesting Travellers—Posting—A Rogue—Count Kleinmichel's recipe.

On our return to the hotel d'Allemagne, we found the equipages at the door, only waiting for us to start. Alexie had arranged our travelling home, having shaken the dust out of our cushions, refilled our tin case with hard boiled eggs, and replenished our stone water-bottles from the river, for the dust and heat had made hydropotes of us both.

A few versts out of Novgorod is the monastery of Verlama, in the cemetery of which is the tomb of the poet Derjaëvin, who flourished in the reign of Catherine II.

And now we enter a pretty suburb of the

pretty Bronitzee, and good-looking young peasant women, in their holiday attire, smile at us from their door-steps, where they sit in groups; some of them hold up their crowing little ones as we pass. Stalwart peasant lads, with broad chests and muscular limbs, saunter about, looking quite jaunty and independent in their low-crowned beavers, garnished with brass buckles, or the eye of a peacock's feather or two, stuck close into the band. And now groups of grey-beards, with dignified step and sage-like mien, pass to and fro; and quaint old dames, in white-kerchiefed head, pop out their withered visages at upper windows, gazing in amazement at our cavalcade; while active dogs and scampering urchins, with bark and shout, escort us, as usual, to the village bounds. As we look out, first at one side and then at the other, enjoying the scene, we find ourselves suddenly submerged in twilight, the hollow rumble of our cavalry intimating that we traverse some sort of viaduct. Overhead a wooden roof appears, supported by a gigantic interlacing of wood-work, composed of whole trees, merely squared off. We were traversing the remarkable covered and fortified bridge, of a single arch, which spans the deep-flowing Msta. Having crossed the river, the picturesque Bronitzee bursts upon the eye of the traveller. Pretty cottages, detached and surrounded by foliage, offer a

pleasing change from the usual bare and untidy-looking arrangements called villages. Gaily-painted window-shutters, and perforated and ornamented broad eaves, and lappets, like lace, adorn these neat little domiciles; and the fine stone church, with its elevated cross glittering up on high among the blue clouds, is seated on an elevation covered with a fine green sward. The scenery here is very pretty.

Momentarily we drew nearer the long chain of the Valdaë hills. The soil hereabouts, instead of the boggy black earth of the lower marsh grounds, is a mixture of lime and stones, and, strange to say, petrifactions of marine plants and ocean shells have been found in the immediate neighbourhood.

Expecting to reach Valdaë soon after sunrise, we purposed retiring early, though going to bed before the sun is in these latitudes a positive penance; the sun-sets are gorgeous beyond description, and the cool air of the evening hours, laden with the perfume of the young firs and the wild blossoms of a thousand different flowers, is most delicious.

But mortality has its exactions, which there is no evading for a continuance, and not the least of these is the great expenditure of time necessary for sleep. Even on King George the Third's scale, of "Six hours for a man, seven for

a woman, and eight for a fool," a third of our short existence is thus swallowed up in forgetfulness, and these precious seven hours out of every twenty-four are on few occasions so much missed as in travelling. It is peculiarly a Russian fashion to travel during the night, to save time. A Russian may be deemed a traveller from his infancy, though he may never have crossed the limits of his colossal fatherland —for a Russian family thinks no more of a summer trip to Irkoutsk, Teflis, or Crim than we would, with all the facilities of steam, to Ireland or Scotland, I doubt if so much,—and thus, accustomed to encounter difficulties of many different kinds, they become the most patient travellers and agreeable *compagnons de voyage* in the world. Therefore, consoling myself for the loss of the magnificient sunset, in learning the Russian art of sleeping to suit time and place, and not nature, we plunged resolutely into the cushions, and awoke at four the next morning in Valdaë, surrounded by hills, and water, and islets, and scenic beauties of all grades and shades, from a busy water-mill to a lake thirty versts long and nine broad.

This Russian Geneva is most romantically situated on the shores of the Valdaësky Lake, which is dominated by mountains 1,250 feet above the level of the sea. Innumerable islands, clothed

with graceful and luxuriant foliage, and with rich green sward down to the water's edge, stud the bosom of this beautiful lake—on one of these the celebrated Patriarch Nickon founded, in 1653, the Monastery of Eversky. Nothing can surpass the beauty of this islet scene, and the retreat of the Patriarch is the most picturesque that can be imagined. The Fathers of the Greco-Russian Church, with the proverbial taste of those of the Latin, seem to have had a keen eye for the beautiful in the selection of *locale;* their churches and religious houses, are always far removed from the din of active life, and generally on such spots as the Great Architect of all has most bountifully ornamented with His Master touch, thus appreciating to the fullest extent the soothing calm which, in the contemplation of natural beauty, leads most minds "up to Nature's God." I was particularly struck by this feeling in my fellow travellers. Whenever a spot more luxuriant or attractive than another presented itself, my exclamation was:—"What a pretty situation for a house," but that of my companions:—"What a spot for a church!"

There is a curious story told about this retreat of Nickon's, formerly called Svatozurskim, or Holy Island, which title arose out of the following legend:—

Scarcely had the first stones of the monastery appeared above the level of the ground, before

hideous demons, and hobgoblins, and unclean spirits of all kinds, rose up out of the lake, and so scared the workmen as to impede the progress of the building. These visitations are reported to have continued until the Patriarch—resolving to carry out his project of building his monastery on that spot, in spite of the arch fiend himself and all his legions—appointed a meeting of the clergy on the island, and, placing himself at their head, marched in solemn procession to that part of it which was the especial haunt of the fiends, where, after offering up a service to God, they cast a Bible and cross into the waters of the lake, thenceforth calling the island "Svatozurskim" or Holy. From that day the demons never ventured to show themselves, and the builders of the monastery being left in peace, the work proceeded "without let or hindrance," and presents at the present moment one of the most romantically beautiful pictures.

Valdaë is divided into the upper and lower town. The former is the *beau quartier*, and the latter the commercial; the population numbers between 5,000 and 6,000, but is more Polish than Russian. Valdaë is remarkable for two things, viz., for its manufacture of bells, and for its brazen belles, both of which are notorious throughout the empire—the former are soft and sweet, the latter, masculine and bold. The Russian women are generally so retiring and modest in their com-

munications with strangers that this anomalous feature presents itself the more forcibly here, and, in the absence of any solution, leaves an unpleasant impression on the mind of the more fastidious traveller. It is, however, accounted for by the fact, that in the time of Alexie Michaelovitch, Valdaë—which had been burnt by John, because a tributary to the rebellious Novgorod — was given up to the Polish prisoners of war, who, settling down in this place, became an ingraft on the weakly sapling, which barely existed, rather than flourished, here at the time of their arrival. They thus imparted a strong flavour of their own element to the parent stock, for the Polish accent predominates even in the pronunciation of the Russian language.

Here we took in a cargo of small hand-bells, hard-boiled eggs, and "baranki," a kind of crisp biscuit made in the form of rings, of all sizes, and strung like beads upon a string. These are far-famed, and enjoy a local manufacture as flourishing as Banbury in cakes, or Reading in biscuits—for every visitor carries off considerable quantities. Numbers of old women and young girls get their living by selling them.

Returning to our travelling home—which began to look very like a gipsy caravan, with its many pendent embellishments dangling from roof and side —we proceeded to hang up our festoons of biscuits

and bells—tying their tongues, of course—and to stow away our eggs in the surrounding pockets. Enjoying our meagre ablution, a sponge full of water and eau de Cologne, and our frugal repast, consisting of an egg, some delicious milk, and a baranki, with that zest, after our morning walk, which would have equally relished a morsel of black bread as the most delicious fare in the world.

How comical we should have looked on a country road in old England, as we jogged along, almost buried in our cushions, with our eggs in our fingers and the salt in a paper receptacle; and ever and anon stretching out our arms at full length for the baranki, which depended in graceful festoons over our heads!

"Only fancy Alexander Nicholaëvitch looking in upon us at this moment, Eudoxie!" I suggested.

"Our good genius forbid," cried my friend, as she surveyed our pose, with something like alarm in her looks. "But that is impossible."

"Not at all," I returned; "with your credulity in respect of mesmeric influence, I wonder that such contingencies have not occurred to you as being possible, before now; for to a clairvoyant—on your argument—a thousand miles are as one, and time and space go for nothing. So what is easier than that Alexander Nicholaëvitch, with those

powers of research for which he is so remarkable, should at this moment be sitting in St. Petersburg, and maliciously scrutinising, with his great blue eyes, our elegant arrangements?" Eudoxie's egg slipped through her fingers.

"Do you believe it possible, Marie Edwardovna?" she hastily inquired, regarding me with the most amusing expression of consternation and alarm.

"Pardon me, you are the Professor; I, the pupil."

Eudoxie remained for some time silent, as if debating the matter within herself, and in the midst of her cogitations we arrived at Zimogorie, twenty versts beyond Valdaë, where we changed horses; and thence through a highly pleasing country, rich in water, and ever varying with hill and dale, to Yedkavo, twenty versts beyond Zimogorie, which is the half-way station to Moscow. And here a travelling carriage, not so formidable as our convoy certainly, but of sufficiently portentous dimensions, and accompanied by a couple of *calèches* had just driven up before us. A poor prospect as to horses, I thought; but to my surprise, out came one pair of animals after another, till the open space in front of the change house resembled a horse fair. Busy moujics "put to," with astonishing alacrity, while a fine-looking military man—evidently a

dignitary of consequence)—stretched his legs walking up and down at a little distance. A pale delicate woman—who we presumed was his wife—leant her head as if for air on the open window-frame of the carriage; and two little black-eyed poppet-girls, in their night caps, kept constantly rummaging about, now looking out at one window, and now at the other, till the easily-swung vehicle rebounded with their movements. Three manly looking boys, with their tutor—who was evidently an Englishman by his air, a fact of which I was further certified by hearing them all conversing in a lively strain in the purest accents of my own mother tongue—occupied one of the *calèches;* while a couple of maids and a carmiltz, or Russian nurse, in her natural costume of green and gold, with a baby, occupied the other.

We afterwards learned that this was Prince ——, one of the largest landed proprietors and most progressive agricultural reformers in the next Government of Tver, which is rather famous for spirited improvers of this stamp. The Prince was *en route* to the German baths with his ailing wife. Poor lady! we wondered if she would ever reach the end of her journey. Her sweet placid face, with its closed eyes and marble hue, looked so death-like in its beauty, as it rested on the window-sill, contrasting so strangely with the little chubby florid countenance that,

hooked on by the chin to the window-frame beside it, laughed gaily as it kissed its plump small hand in adieu to us, as their cavalcade drove off.

Happily, far from a dearth of horses, as we had for a moment feared, there were more than enough and to spare; for, after the Prince was served, and ours put to, half-a-dozen, at least, were led back to their stalls.

Want of horses is sometimes a sore subject with travellers, for although a large number are kept at every change house, there are times when the supply runs far short of the demand. This is scarcely to be wondered at when it is considered that some carriages require as many as five, seven, eight, and nine. On the present occasion, the Prince took thirteen, and we eight; and it was just possible that, at this particular season, we might be closely followed up by several parties, each requiring as many more. No matter what may at any time be the demand for horses, the postmaster is obliged to have a certain number, over and above these, for the use of the Crown, at any moment, night or day, that a Government messenger chooses to call for them. In short, he ought never to be without horses, no matter what the demand. This fundamental principle was the origin of posting establishments in Russia; for John IV.—afterwards "the Terrible"—in 1505, established post stations

throughout the empire for the convenience of crown messengers. At these different stations they could also procure refreshments. Out of this institution grew the public convenience enjoyed at the present day, for Alexie Theodorovitch selected a certain number of peasants, and incorporated them into a public body under the denomination of "Yemschickii." These Yemschicks are generally freemen, or crown peasants. They are exempt from military service, receive certain wages, and enjoy many immunities, on condition of regularly supplying horses for the crown and post station duty. The traveller can either contract with one of this body for the necessary relays along the road, or by paying about a farthing per verst upon every horse, obtain a "podaroshna," or Government order, which entitles him to demand his horses at every station. The whole cost for horses—this extra farthing included—does not exceed a penny a horse, per verst. By this plan, the traveller knows exactly what he has to pay; "tea-money" to the driver, being a gratuity of a grievenic, about threepence, is the only extra, though those who can afford to travel in this way seldom offer so little.

Those travellers to whom the farthing tax is a consideration, contract with the Yemschickii, who are always to be found about the post-yards in

cities. Intuitively they seem to know the traveller, for the moment he enters the "postoyale dvoree," or post-yard, they run towards him, and surrounding him in great numbers, eagerly enquire, "Cuda, cuda,"—whither, whither. The traveller then enters into particulars; the longer the distance, the more desirable is the job. They then debate the subject among themselves, and at length a price is submitted to the traveller, which is, at the very least, twice as much as they eventually take. At length, after much talk, the contract is settled, and on the appointed day, off sets the traveller with his Yemschick, who drives him several stages on his way. Here, however, he transfers his customer to another, with whom he contracts for the remainder of the distance, often pocketing a considerable profit by the transfer. On a long journey, the traveller may be thus transferred several times, but without trouble to himself, his contract having been made with the first only. Occasionally, several may desire to take the contract; in this contingency they have a curious way of settling the matter. One of them flings his whip into the air, and another catches it as it falls; when these two seize it, and, measuring its length, as it were, hand over hand to the end of the handle, he who has the last grasp of it wins, and thus takes up the contract.

The Yemschickji as a body are a handsome set of fellows, with hair and beards as black as coal, or of the more favourite "lemone," or yellow, and with their bronzed faces and muscular throats, broad chests, white teeth, and frank, independent, even courtly, air present a magnificent study for the artist. Some of them grow rich enough to build churches and stone inns, as we have already seen *en route*.

Queer scenes are sometimes enacted at these post-houses, between the "Smotretye," or overseer, —whose duty it is to furnish the horses—and his customers, and both are often enough at their wit's end. If this Smotretye happens to be an honest fellow, his "tear and wear" kind of life is anything but enviable; indeed one may nearly always distinguish the honest man of this class from the rogue, by the care-worn, anxious, and cadaverous cast of his countenance, and by his lanky angular form, for he, poor fellow! gets all the hard words and cuffs, by faithfully reserving his horses for the Imperial use, while the rogue grows fat upon his ruble bribes for yielding them up to the highest bidder, the competition being very considerable.

A characteristic anecdote is told of a rogue of this stamp, and of the mercurial and prompt Minister of Public Works, Count Kleinmichel.

The Count, almost as quick in his transits, and as punctual to time, as his Imperial master, had been ordered to meet the Tzar at St. Petersburg, at a given hour on a particular day. At the time the Count received this command he was far in the interior, superintending some critical work in his department, and it required the greatest effort of expedition to reach the capital within the given time. But the man who strained so many nerves to rebuild the Winter Palace in one year, was not likely to be wanting on such a trivial—in comparison — occasion as the present. Therefore, flinging himself into his travelling-carriage, he dashed off towards the northern capital, at a speed seldom witnessed out of Russia, until within a few versts of Petersburg, where he came to a dead halt for want of horses. The Smotretye had none. The rage of the minister, to whom minutes were of more consequence than gold, may be imagined. Though by no means a powerfully made man, he is described as having shaken the sleek delinquent, who was a muscular, powerful fellow, with the ease and violence that a mastiff would a pet spaniel, till the rogue, probably doubtful where it might end, feigned a fainting fit, and the minister, thinking he had enough, jumped into a peasant's cart which happened to be passing, and flew, rather than drove, into the capital, saving his appointment with the Tzar by a mere fraction of time. This was a fine

story for the enemies of the Count, who is one of the richest men in Russia in this respect, by whom it was even affirmed that he had shaken the Smotretye to death.

CHAPTER III.

Vishnei-Volotjok — Connection of the Caspian and Baltic Seas—Torjock—Chicken Cutlet—English Travellers—Russian Climate a Cure for Consumption—Hay Bed—Tver—Volga, the Ancient Rha—Rhubarb—Alarm on Crossing the Volga—Peculiarity of Pronunciation at Tver—Klein—Tchemayà-Griasse—First Glimpse of Moscow—Palace Residence of Napoleon—Overpowering Sense of the Distance from Home.

VISHNEI-VOLOTJOK is a handsome town, with a population of 11,000. The commercial importance of this place is very considerable, for here the Caspian and Baltic seas are united by numerous canals, which, at a little distance from the town, have a remarkably pretty effect. By means of these canals, the great arterial Volga mingles its far-travelled waters with those of the imperial Neva. This, therefore, is the emporium for the merchandise of Astracan, and the greater part of

Southern Russia. It presents all the bustle and life of a small seaport, but one of a refined kind. Laughter and song mingle with the busy sound of the hammer, for bark building is carried on to a very large extent, and the Vishnei-Volotjokians are so famous for song that little is done out of doors, or in, without this enlivening accompaniment.

Torjock, fifty-five miles farther on, is another stirring place, for through its precincts flows the Tvertza, conveying on its bosom the wealth of the East to the Imperial Petersburg, and bringing back the luxuries of Western Europe to those scattered along the banks of the Volga and its tributaries, ay, and far, far beyond it, even to those remote regions on the opposite shores of the Caspian. Between five and six thousand barks annually pass Torjock, and thus a brisk trade is carried on with the most important places in the empire — Moscow, Petersburg, Nischnei-Novgorod, Malo-Russia, and, indeed, with all those watered by the Volga and Tvertza, thus rendering Torjock one of the most important places for situation in the empire. Nor were the good folks of Torjock ignorant of their strength even at an early period of their history, for in the thirteenth century, having quarrelled with the Novgorodians, they cut off their supplies, and starved them into making a peace. Notwithstanding their

occasional strife, however, the inhabitants of these two cities were great allies, and on this account they suffered severely, for five times, John, in his rage against the people of Novgorod, levelled Torjock with the ground, and as often did they rebuild it, and revive their trade.

Here one may provide himself with a variety of very pretty *souvenirs* of his visit thus far into the interior. Numerous are the temptations, in the way of slippers, cushions, smoking-caps, &c., &c., richly embroidered in gold, silver, and coloured silks. The usual cost of these slippers is about 2s. 6d. here; in the capitals, about 3s. Excellent, well-made portmanteaux, of all sizes, and fitted up with every convenience, are to be had from 10s. to 70s.; the scarlet and green leathers are of extremely fine colour, and a delicate fawn, without gloss or polish, which is just becoming fashionable for cabinet and hall chairs, is very beautiful. Mattresses and pillows, boots, shoes, portfolios, and harness of all descriptions, are manufactured in immense quantities. Every place and thing is most appropriately scented with "Russia leather," but this agreeable odour, like the prophets of old, is more in favour abroad than at home, for the Russians, generally speaking, dislike it exceedingly.

Fairs are held here twice a-year, and upwards of 600,000 rubles worth of peasant-women's work

is disposed of. A Tverisky peasant bride generally brings home a weighty dower, and, as a wife, is a never-ending source of wealth to her serf lord.

The hotel was by no means bad; the tea, cream, and eggs, superlative; and a kind of cutlet, made of minced chicken, and served very hot, proved a perfect *bonne bouche* for a *gourmand*. The little inn enjoys at least an empire-wide notoriety for this particular "plat," the receipt for making which the keen landlady copied from the Imperial cook, the present Empress having on one occasion, some years ago, when *en route* to Moscow, stopped here to dine.

The house appeared to be full of travellers, a *posse* of whom we encountered in the entrance-hall, as we took our leave. These were swarming round a glass case full of articles of Torjock manufacture, presided over by the proprietor, who was doing a brisk business with novices, who paid nearly double for making their purchases in the hotel, instead of at the shops in the town. Among a strange medley of physiognomies, tongues, and costumes, were an English lady and gentleman, who appeared perfectly bewildered by the unintelligible storm of words and furious gesticulations raised by a party of French gentlemen, who vowed they were being cheated, though we could not exactly see how. Not being able to say

all they wished in the language of the vendor, they vociferated to each other at the "very top of their voices," when it appeared that they had been asked twice as much for an article as they had seen others give for the same thing, the latter having bargained for it, and the former not knowing how to do so; and they seemed just upon the very eve of thrashing each other, in the heat of their excitement, when a Russian officer politely volunteered his aid, and set matters straight.

The English couple were travelling for health's sake; the gentleman, being consumptive, had been ordered to Russia by a medical man in London, and even at that early stage of his journey he already felt a decided benefit. Pulmonary complaints are extremely rare in Russia; the air is light, dry, and nourishing. I have since then met half-a-dozen such persons, who, with one exception, returned home, after a summer's wanderings, quite restored.

Already we approach Tver, and glittering in the morning sun, sweeps on with mighty volume the grand and glorious Volga,* imperial queen of

* The Rha of the ancients. The finest medicinal rhubarb—called, from the river, "Rhabarbarum"—hence its perversion into "rhubarb"—grows wild on its banks, and is the finest in the world. Most of that imported into England as Turkey rhubarb is grown on the banks of the Volga. Some say that the waters of the Volga are powerful astringents, and, as near every poison grows its antidote, so this useful cathartic is

Russian rivers, a mighty torrent at its very source, more imposing and stronger at the present season than at any other, for the snows which still cover its birth-place are thawing, and fill its deep bed to overflowing. This magnificent stream takes its rise from a very small source. In one of the highest of the Allaoogekaya mountains, near the village of Volgina-Verhocovoë, in the Government of Tver, is a spring, surrounded by marshes and several lakes, which, at its very source, swell out the infant spring to such a depth that barks float on its bosom; after this, it runs through three lakes, and now of considerable volume, rolls along to meet the Tverza, and, after a course of 2,700 miles, approaches the Caspian Sea, where, separating into more branches than the Nile, it falls by many mouths into that sea; having traversed eight governments, and received the tribute of two hundred rivers *en route!* The broadest part of this superb river is in its course through the governments of Saratov and Simbirsk, where it is five versts wide, which, on the melting of the snows in spring, extend to twenty. At this season, meadows and young plantations dis-

within reach to qualify the tonic properties of this glorious river. The Russians make little use of rhubarb, either root or stalk, though occasionally I have eaten the stalk chopped up, and in a raw state, in summer soup; but they have no idea of cooking it, or making it into preserves or wine, as in England.

appear for several weeks, and boats and barks take a near cut across the country. The game suffers considerably, the birds' nests being destroyed; but a bountiful supply of delicious fish—among which the much-prized sterlit is in great plenty—makes up for this deficiency. Thus, from its very source to its *embouchure*, this mighty stream is navigable the whole 2,700 miles, unimpeded by a single cataract.

Tver is a little beauty among Russian country towns, a tiny Petersburg, a gem set among the hills; while all is flat and marshy around it, and, but for the mighty sweeping river, would be dreary also, reminding one, not only of the Imperial capital of the North, but of the scenery which surrounds it.

Having ascended one of these hills, our panting steeds stayed a moment to recover themselves, and we, to gaze out upon the deep-rolling Volga, which coursed along at the bottom of it, and on the other side of which lay basking in the sun the miniature city. Not a bridge, however, or the vestige of one, was to be seen, and yet the Yemschick, and Alexie and Eudoxie, insisted that there was, and that we were to cross it, too. I began to wonder whether they, or I, or the bridge, was under a cloud, when the question was speedily solved, for down we rattled with marvellous expedition. The hind feet of most post-horses being unprovided with shoes, the animals slid down the

short steep, somewhat after the fashion of cows; but a Russian horse, like his peasant master, knows nothing of fear, and so, having slid down hill, they splashed their way with us into the stream, taking to the water like ducks; while their unblinkered eyes roved now up the river, and now down, as if marking their whereabouts, till presently their hoofs resounded on something, which turned out to be the submerged bridge, and after a long time of splashing and uncertainty as to our fate, we emerged in Tver. This bridge is 555 feet long.

How the Yemschick guided his top-heavy vehicle, swaggering and reeling from side to side, like a vessel "tacking," is more than I ventured to think about at the time, although it did occur to me that if the Russians were not the best sailors, they certainly were the best drivers in the world, although doubtless a great deal is owing to the sagacity of the native horses. In this instance they picked their way to the bridge, evidently knowing all about it; and when once fairly embarked thereon, they seemed to enjoy the *trajet* amazingly, stopping *en route* more than once, snapping at the water as if in play, while their long tails floated about like sea-weed.

Having gained the ascent on the opposite side, our cavalry scrambled up the embankment, and we found ourselves dashing with much clatter

up a clean and very wide street, the principal one in Tver, and called, *par excellence*, the Millionée, in which we drew up before a very snug and modern built brick hotel, with bay windows. Here we breakfasted, a few members of our party setting out to explore, while the others slept.

Intuitively taking our way to the Gastinoë Dvor, we were surprised to find it almost as large and well stocked as that of St. Petersburg. For the first time, the silver, and plated, and iron, and copper goods of Tula* manufacture arrested our attention. Judging by the rage of the Peterburghers for English cutlery, I had naturally imagined they had none of their own; but here, to my amazement, was a mine of wealth hitherto unexplored by any of our party, to whom it appeared quite as extraordinary as to myself. The ladies knew nothing about it; all they knew was that for such things they dealt at the English Magazine in St. Petersburg; and the maid declared that the scissors, knives, box, and

* Tula, the Sheffield of Russia, is the flourishing capital of a Government of the same name. It has manufactures of silver, copper, plated goods, leather, iron, soap, hardware, &c., and in the immediate vicinity are coal and iron in great quantities. The population is about 40,000, and the half of this finds employment in the Crown works for the manufacture of cannon and fire-arms. 100,000 muskets, and 80,000 swords, are made annually, besides other articles of the same kind, in equal quantities. Tula is about a hundred miles south of Moscow.

flat irons &c. which we looked at, were all English made, though the Russian stamp marked each in the most unmistakable manner. The "finish" of some of these articles was perfect.

The modesty of the young girls of Tver is proverbial, and in conversing with a party of them who had cucumbers to sell, we discovered a peculiarity in their pronunciation, a very rare thing indeed, for there is neither patois, nor slang, nor provincialism among the lower orders in Russia, and this is surprising, remembering how comparatively few can read and write. This purity is therefore attributable to the correctness of the ear alone. The lower orders in St. Petersburg, however, have a slight peculiarity; in addressing superiors, they add an S to most words. For instance—"da," or yes, in the mouth of the Peterburgher tradesman who wishes to be particularly polite, becomes "das," but in that of the Tver tradesman, or peasant, it becomes "das-ta," and in other words in like manner, which is amusing even to one but partially acquainted with the language. Nor is this addition in letters the only remarkable feature of their organs of speech and sound. Greachy, the Russian *savant*, when speaking of song, remarks "that the farther south in Russia, the longer the peasant sustains the last cadence of the verse." To this he not unfrequently adds a shake, taking

it an octave higher than the last note, and upon this he trills away, now swelling it out; now rendering it soft and faint, and again increasing the sound with the swell, until the stranger-listener wonders when it will fairly die out; and when it does, it generally leaves a sentimental languor on the senses, which vibrates in the heart long after the song has passed away. At Tver, this pleasing property becomes already observable, and presents a strong contrast to the light and lively airs of the unsubduable Novgorodians. In the Government of Tambov the peasants are remarkable for the length and perfection of this finishing shake. Tambov is considered by the Russians the least civilised Government in the empire, and the neighbouring one of Yaroslav, the most so. In the latter, the peasantry are poetic, and sing their own impromptu compositions with ease and taste; and every embellishment of turn and shake, so eagerly practised by the ambitious, they perform to perfection.

The banks of the Volga at Tver are by no means picturesque, for scarcely a tree, or bit of greensward — the palace gardens excepted — embellishes its banks; but like the unsightly wharves on our old Thames, the useful, more than the ornamental, seems to be the all-important consideration. Hundreds of barges were lying

alongside, several of which were heavily laden with eggs, for exportation to St. Petersburg, which also receives immense quantities of grain from this neighbourhood.

Fifteen and a-half versts from Tver is Emmaus, a small station where we changed horses; and thirteen versts beyond, we again changed, at Gorodna, another victim to the wrath of John. Here, in a small place, with a population certainly not exceeding 2,000, we found two large hotels, and several smaller places of accommodation for visitors, thus intimating our near approach to Moscow. And, though still 77 versts distant, we begin telling off the verst posts with the impatience of children, as we hurry past them—on, on, on, with bickering, hard-sounding tramp, and musical tingle, ingle, tingle, ingle. Thus, counting the remainder of the road by inches, we changed horses at Tzo-ve-do-va, thirteen and a-half versts, and also at Klinn, twenty-three beyond that. In this neighbourhood are several volcanic remains, and at the next station, Pod-solsh-nayagora, or "burning mountain," is a tolerable evidence of the fact; though this so-called mountain—a good-sized hill—has not been active of late years, yet aged peasants in the vicinity say their fathers remembered it to have been so in their youth. The country round has a very prosperous appearance, dotted all over

with well-peopled villages and fine pastures, on which patriarchal-sized herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were grazing.

Seventeen versts nearer Moscow, and we arrive at Dourac-Kina—foolish woman. At midnight we changed horses at Tchernaya-Griassè—black dirt; dozed to the next village of Heemka, awaking with the god of day to a vision of Eastern magnificence. Our road, still the great macadamized highway, has now penetrated a suburb of Moscow, and runs along a pretty boulevard, flanked by young trees; and trees only are to be seen for some distance, till suddenly, through their numerous small bolls, a bright red building appears; a curious erection, picked out with white, semi-gothic in its style, seated on a lawn of rich yellow green, surrounded by yellow-green foliage, all so bright and fresh that it reminded me more of a *pièce monté* for a supper-table, or of an exaggerated and over-coloured painting, than of actual bricks and mortar. This is Peter's palace, built by Catherine in 1773. Here she rested on her way to the Black Sea. From this retreat the sovereigns of Russia make their solemn entry into Moscow to be crowned. And in 1812, he,

"Whose game was empires, and whose stake was thrones,
Whose table earth, whose dice were human bones,"

passed here those momentous days, already laden with the crisis of his fate. Immediately surrounding the Palace, and dotted here and there in its splendid park, are innumerable villa residences, of every style of architecture. These are the summer homes of the wealthy, their miniature pleasure-grounds around being laid out with exquisite taste. They are of recent date, and own as their general architect and designer, the Emperor Nicholas. We are still on the umbrageous boulevard, and within two miles of the ancient city; yet by no peep, however transient, or bird's-eye-view, however distant, is the traveller prepared for the august presence of that venerable "white-stoned mother of all Russia" so near him, till suddenly a thousand spires, like burnished darts, seem to shoot upwards from the green trees in advance, and glittering cupolas, and grand domes and towers, all surmounted by the crescent and the cross, with filigree chain-work suspended from them, like webs of spangles floating on the blue clouds, and over all the huge cross of Ivan the Great, flash and scintillate through the yellow-green trees, affording, to the sober ideas of a Western European, visions of Utopian story, which, even while regarding, he finds it difficult to realise. The beautiful bells peal out on all sides; and Alexie and the yemschick, cap in hand, stand up, bow, and cross themselves, muttering, as they do so, "Svaitaëya Moskva, Holy

mother. Bye-loë câmnea matoushka, or white-stoned mother."

Already we have entered the ancient city by the Tver gate, and dashing up the Tverskâya at the usual *finale* speed, we draw up at the Hotel de Dresde, where we are to rest for a day or two to see something of the city; but unwilling to lose a moment of our brief *séjour*, *calèches* were ordered, and in twenty minutes after, we found ourselves on the top of Ivan le Grand, the great octagonal bell-tower in the Kreml, fairly up among the blue clouds, and with a scene of glittering magnificence spread out at our feet, almost beyond description—a reality however, but one more nearly allied to the genii creation of Eastern extravaganza than I had ever hoped to look upon in this prosy world; and one so thoroughly overpowering, so grand, so lovely, so holy, and above all so expressive, in its Asiatic features, of my real distance from home, that, fairly subdued by conflicting feelings, the tears gushed to my eyes, which only served to heighten the brilliancy of the effect, a faint description of which it may be as well to reserve for another chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

Moscow—Beauty of the Holy City—Wealth and Power of the Nobility and Clergy — The History of the Kreml, from Russian History—Exhumation of the Great Bell by the Grand Duke Constantine—The Hermit of the Forest—Origin of the "White-stoned Mother"—A Visit in Moscow —Dwarfs and Fools—A Dwarf in a Pie.

Moscow,
"Aux cupoles dorées."

But who has ever looked on Moscow for the first time unmoved? Even the most invidious traveller in Russia has bowed to her august presence, and yielded to her the precedence among the capitals of the earth. Her unique magnificence is her's alone, and the hospitality of her people unrivalled. Here are still remnants of the original Slavenæ, all "glorious" still.

Churches, imposing in their grandeur of dimension, and of mosque-like form, meet the gaze

of the astonished stranger in every direction, ornamented by terrace and pillar, by many steeples, by graceful spire and cupola, by huge domes of gold and silver, of brilliant purple and green, sewn with stars, and surmounted by the glittering crescent, dominated by the cross, from the richly wrought arms of which depend numerous chains of filigree-work. These, penetrating the clouds, fill the upper regions of Moscow with inconceivable splendour; a single ray of light being sufficient to illuminate this gorgeous and varied scene for miles around.

When viewed from the third story of our hotel—consequently considerably below these scintillating elevations—the city conveyed the idea of one vast cathedral, intersected here and there with palace, cottage, and garden, the breaks and interstices being filled up by feathery foliage of the most delicate tinting. But from the heights of Ivan Veleekie, the vast amphitheatre beneath and around seemed one undulating bed of variegated green, profusely dotted with churches, monasteries, white palaces, and chateaux, amid which the glistening Moskva winds in and out, and roundabout, like a silver eel. Thousands of domes, and spires, and towers flash, and burn, and scintillate, in clusters or singly, beneath and around; while, far as the eye can reach, dotted here and there along the horizon, bright burnished

specks gleam like scattered spangles resting on the confines of earth, marking the site of some distant and revered monastery or church.

Well may the pious Russian call his Moscow "The beloved white-stoned mother—the holy city!" for even the most indifferent stranger's heart glows with admiration as he gazes, while the more enthusiastic is astonished, dazzled, enchanted.

It is, in short, a city of cathedrals and palaces, great and grand, and as fanciful in design as they are varied—a dwelling-place worthy of emperors, and kings, and the great ones of the earth, but in reality the home of the most ancient and powerful nobility, and of the richest churchmen in the empire, who for upwards of seven hundred years have grown with its greatness, and at the present day reign over a million and a-half of serfs—for nearly the whole of the large Government of Moscow belongs to them. Men, proud of their high descent and ancient name, of their wealth, and, above all, of their religion and patriotism—the head and heart of the real Russian nobility.

Taking leave of Ivan Veleekie, we descended to explore that singular triangular-shaped concatenation of monastery, cathedral, palace, tower, museum, and mausoleum, called by the Russians the Kreml, and out of which rises the extraordinary erection we had just descended, being the tower

of a church dedicated to John the Baptist. There are in all thirty-two bells in the several stories of this grand tower, and among them that belonging to the Council of Novgorod, which John brought here when he destroyed the city.

Near the base of this tower is the "Great Bell of Moscow," which fell from the top of the tower of Ivan the Great, some years since, when it was burnt. The bell is quite entire, with the exception of a small triangular chip out of its edge. When it fell, it was nearly buried in the earth, and so remained for a number of years, until the Grand Duke Constantine — with whom it had been a favourite project from his boyhood—was old enough to superintend its excavation. The *protegé* of His Imperial Highness now occupies a granite pedestal among the other wonders of the Kreml—a monument of the skill of his countrymen, and of his own good taste in the resuscitation of an object which, though fallen and broken, deserves a high position among works of labour and art. Its sound was unusually fine. This house of a bell is 19 feet high, 21 yards round the edge, 20 inches at its greatest thickness, and of the stupendous weight of 400,000 lbs., and, therefore bears about the same proportion to the great bell of Pekin that the great bell of Pekin does to St. Paul's in London—in both cases, a pigmy to a giant. On regarding this immense

weight of metal, the thought uppermost is how any piece of masonry could be made sufficiently strong to support such a tremendous affair, even for a single moment! The bell now occupying the height of Ivan Veleekie is not so large as the deposed monarch at its feet, but is, nevertheless, a wonder of perfection. It is only rung out on very particular occasions, when the tower shakes to its very foundations. At the Easter midnight, this king of bells announces the resurrection, when its sweet mournful strain is described as being like a voice from the clouds, and is heard for many miles around Moscow.

But, ere we proceed farther, it may be as well, at this point, to describe the little germ whence sprang the shell and husk, the mighty roots and branches, swelling out into the great and imposing Moscow of the present day, which, with her various circles, and places, and beautiful suburbs, equals in circumference our own great capital of London.

And here we turn again to that agreeable Mentor who has been our guide hitherto—the intelligent Russian authoress, Miss Eshemoff.

The Foundation of Moscow.
1147.

"On the spot now occupied by the Kreml, and which is elevated twenty feet above the river, once

stood a forest which was surrounded by fertile meadows. In this forest lived a hermit,* a poor and godly man, who had dwelt there from his youth. On the death of this hermit, Giorgi Dolgorookie —son of the great Vladimir Monomachus—surnamed the long or fast-fingered, built a church. This was the first church of Moscow, and at the present day occupies a place in the square of the great palace of Ivan the Great, built in 1488, and most of which remains in its original condition. This church is the most revered spot in the Russian Empire, not even excepting the renowned Troitzka, seventy versts hence. Its appearance is most diminutive, surrounded as it is by the high walls of this palace of Ivan, and reminds one of a small kernel in a huge husk. Scarcely more than a dozen people can find room within its precincts. Lights are constantly burning, and prayers never cease in the little chapel, which is the particular repository of the Eversky† Boja-mâter, or picture of the Virgin Mary, called our Lady of Eversky, having been presented by the Bishop of Eversky in 1666. Numerous churches, cathedrals, and

* These ascetics are still by no means uncommon in Russia. They adopt, as their model, John the Baptist, and go out into the wildernesses alone, living, as he did, principally on wild honey, to which they add roots, vegetables, and occasionally fish.

† Iberia, now called Georgia.

palaces join and surround the Palace of Ivan, and thus form a second enclosure to the ancient relic, all of which, including the New Palace built by the Emperor Nicholas, with many other objects, highly interesting to strangers, and revered by the Muscovites for their old associations, are enclosed by a strong wall, one mile and a-half in circumference. This wall is in the form of an imperfect triangle, and has eighteen towers and five gates, on each of which is a picture. Thus the Kreml is entirely separated from the city. John III. sent to Italy for the celebrated architect, Fiorovente, and to him was entrusted the construction of the wall which at the present day surrounds the Kreml. Fiorovente also "touched up" all the buildings within the enclosure. Immediately surrounding the Kreml wall is Kataë Town. This was at first a colony of foreigners and tradesmen from a distance, who settled here to supply necessaries and bagatelle *souvenirs* to the pilgrims and other visitors whom devotion or curiosity brought to this holy place.*

This Kataë Town was fortified, and a moat placed round it, by Helena Gleńskaëya, the mother of John the Terrible. She called it

* A similar rising city is the Troitzka Lavra, situated about seventy versts from Moscow. It was founded in the fourteenth century by St. Serge, and after the Eversky chapel, is deemed the most sanctified shrine in the empire.

Kataë after the town in Podolsk where she was born. A fine crenated wall surrounded Kataë town, the remains of which are still visible; this wall had four gates, called the Nicholas, Barbara, Illien, and the gate of the Ascension. Kataë town is nearly three versts in circumference, and pleasantly ornamented with shady walks. The great Gastinoë Dvor, in which are 860 shops, is situated here; also the Exchange, the University, and a fire-proof building, in which the city records are placed. Here, also, is the famous Lobnoë Mesto, an immense block of stone, anciently the forum and place of execution. Kataë Town is also called Krasnoë-gorod, or red-town, from the red chintz manufactured there; the gates of Kataë Town lead into another *ceinture*, called the White Town, which was formerly surrounded by a wall having nine gates; not a vestige either of wall or gates now remains. Shady avenues occupy the places of wall and moat, and squares, that of the gates, which is about as bamboozling to a stranger as when in London he is directed to Aldersgate or Knightsbridge, and finds the very reverse of what their names lead him to expect. The White Town consisted chiefly of houses belonging to the Boyards. These houses were the gift of the Crown, given on condition that they were to be embellished and well kept up; they were built of stone or bricks, and

whitewashed, hence the term White Town, and "White Stoned Mother," "Byeloë Kam-ni-ya Ma-toush-ka," as applied to the beloved city by her children.

The fourth *ceinture* round the Kreml is called the Zimiliano-gorod, or Earth Town. In 1592, just after the invasion of the Crim Tartars, the Emperor Theodore, the son of John, erected a wooden wall round this Earth Town; this wall had seventy-five towers, and as many gates; it was afterwards burnt by the Poles, though two of the towers still remain. Earth Town is divided into seven districts, a considerable portion of which is situated on the right bank of the Moskva, and is now, as formerly, much frequented by foreigners, chiefly Eastern merchants. Beyond the Earth Town is still another *ceinture* of picturesque suburbs, divided into eight districts. A rampart, furnished with eighteen gates, encloses the whole of this magnificent city, which appears to have risen up out of the ruins of 1812, a hundredfold more brilliant, rich, and powerful than she was before, for every day adds to her wealth, and consequently to her strength, in the ever-increasing facility of internal commercial communication, of which she is still the centre, now, as of yore.

Her population during the winter is estimated at 400,000. Moscow is the great *entrepôt* of the wool trade, which is annually increasing in import-

ance; also the silk manufactures, in which between 30,000 and 40,000 poods of raw silk are employed. Some of the chintzes and cottons made here are extremely beautiful, quite equal to any in Western Europe. The colours of these printed cottons are most brilliant, and not only wash well, but some that have been tried bear boiling. The sewing silks here are of much better make and die than they were, even a year ago; de laines, lustrines, merinos, and many other stuff goods, are quite equal to those made in England, and in some cases have attained to the perfection of the French. Some of the richer materials, such as brocades, and cloths of gold and silver, are quite *unique* in brilliancy, delicacy, and elegance of design. The machinery employed is chiefly French, English, Belgian, and German. The progress made, and the proficiency obtained, in these manufactures within the last ten years is almost incredible. By means of the little Moskva river, which communicates with the Volga and Oka, the manufactures of Moscow are transmitted to the shores of the Caspian, and thence over Asia, even to China, while, by the same means, the products of the soil are sent to Petersburg. In the spring the little stream swells out into a noble river, floating a train of barks on its bosom; but later, when the waters diminish, rafts are employed for transporting

merchandise; this is necessarily a slow process. Surely if the Muscovites knew of the light steam-boats we have on the Thames—those, for instance, employed in the passenger traffic to the shallows of Richmond, drawing only eighteen inches of water—they would engage a fleet of them. What time and labour would thus be saved, and how picturesque and business-like, to the eye of progress and trade, would be the effect of these puffing little *affairés* under the old Kreml walls!

Undoubtedly Moscow is the only true capital of Russia, and she appears determined to maintain her supremacy. This government is the richest, and consequently the most thriving, in the empire. Every road throughout these colossal dominions either starts from, or terminates at, Moscow, and when the fast-progressing railroads shall extend their ramifications throughout Russia, this revered "mother" will present on modern maps the same iron-bound appearance as our old Babel. She already has her "Great Northern," straight as an arrow, to her mouth-piece, St. Pétersburg, through which, after all, she breathes, and lives, and improves.

The next thing Russia requires, after railroads, is an organised body of guides, men competent to give the stranger *authentic* and full information of the various *locales*. This empire teems with highly interesting historical associations, for no

country has a more eventful history, or one so replete with romantic episodes, few of which are known to the Western world, and those imperfectly. At present the stranger, either at St. Petersburg or Moscow, must depend upon the limited and incorrect testimony of the "blind" guides he finds in charge of the various show-places; or the scraps he picks up from other visitors like himself, which, except as regards any of the great land-marks, such as the tower of Ivan the Great, the Gastinoë Dvor, &c., which everyone knows and cannot mistake, are almost sure to be incorrect, and so limited as scarcely to evoke any interest beyond that which affects the eye only; while every spot he treads is sacred ground, dyed with the blood of heroes and martyrs, and resounding still, to memory's ear, with the groans of the outraged. If we take only that portion of her history connected with the Tartar usurpation — which may well be deemed its blackest page—how many harrowing episodes we learn of a brave and Christian people, struggling for 200 years under the yoke of the hated heathen! And when at length John IV. goes forth with the first regular army ever organized in Russia, and marching upon Kazan,* the great Tartar stronghold, uproots for

* Kazan was the first government in Russia that voluntarily embraced Christianity.

ever that standard planted in his country by Ghengis Khan, Bâti, Mamaë, and Tamerlane, compelling the Tartar chief to kiss his stirrup, and to lay his title of "Tzar," or Ruler, at his feet. John returns, a proud victor, to his capital, from whence grateful hosts pour forth to carry him in triumph to that "holy of holies," the little chapel within the Kreml walls. But suddenly, he who has delivered them from the Tartar becomes an oppressor far more dire, wringing from the agony and bitter cry of the Muscovites that surname of the "Terrible," by which he is known to posterity, and by which we are reminded of the awful price they paid for their deliverance from Tartar oppression.* Scarcely had they gathered their scattered household gods around them after the death of John the Terrible, when the Poles invaded Russia, and traced with bloody finger the history of another tragedy, perpetrated on their hearths and in their very churches. Not a square inch of Moscow but has its own peculiar tale affixed to it. And now that the West has been studied by heart, that the tide of tourist exploration appears to be setting in eastwards, and that Russia in her turn may expect to be overrun, it really would be a boon to the coming hosts, and

* John IV. was wounded in several places at the Siege of Kazan, and some suppose that he became mad from a neglected wound in the head, coupled with the death of his wife, Anastasia, to whom he was devoted.

even to the Russians themselves, to have well-informed guides, speaking German and French. Here indeed the *blasé* Western tourist would find "something new," of which doubtless he would retain a lively impression, if initiated by some of the eloquent, courteous, classical-looking Muscovites in national beard and caftan. But this class would have to be made. To a people however who ignore the word "impossible," and often remove mountains of difficulty by the simple application of their "Kacknee bouit,"* this would be an easy matter. It is not here as in a densely populated country, where wits become precociously sharpened, and high intelligence is often found in very subordinate positions. Here is no class, for example, like our functionaries who have the care of show-places. No Tower "beef-eaters" with their authentic historic story at their finger-ends. And I doubt if in all Russia could be found such a notoriety as that official who shows one over the prison of York Castle, and who relates, with the precision of stereotype, the minute history of all the bent pokers and oaken cudgels, the remnants of wearing-apparel, the crow-bars, clasp-knives, and other items of that heterogeneous collection under

* "Kacknee bouit," signifies "how one can," "anyhow," but means literally, "It must be done by some means."

his charge, from the skull of Eugene Aram's victim to a nail, that have served as condemnatory evidence against a black catalogue from an age ago, up to the present time! Only through a medium of this kind, however, will strangers in Russia arrive at anything like a just view of the country and people; for there are difficulties in the way of making her acquaintance which do not exist with respect to any other nations of Europe. The language—that only true medium of insight into character—is known to few beyond the limits of the empire, and with the exception of the educated classes within those limits, few speak any other. In this dilemma, the foreign visitor applies to those of his own compatriots settled in the country, and scraps of information, thus acquired, are, in nine cases out of ten, more incorrect than those supplied even by the ignorant functionaries now in charge; besides which, they have a peculiar bias and certain prejudices inherent to their position, for, as a general rule, there is just as much difference between the casual visitor to a remote foreign country, and those of the same nation settled in it, as there is between the Russian serf assigned to a certain spot, and the free peasant who, as a pedlar, roams with his pack on his back all over the empire. The views of the former are circumscribed, warped, and crumpled up within the

circle of a span, while those of his cosmopolitan brother are generous, tolerant, world-wide!

The refined and educated, who are best acquainted with the institutions of their own nation, whatever that nation may be, are always most tolerant in their opinion of others. This holds pointedly good of Russia. Her bitterest foes without are chiefly among the ignorant, who know her least—those, for instance, who take their own impressions of the whole nation from such of her denizens as perchance they may have espied from back windows in continental hotels, "cuffing" their domestics in the court-yard below. If foreigners judge of us as a nation by stray "waifs" like these, I fear we must cut but a sorry figure indeed!

There are no one-horse "flies" in Russia; nor any vehicle of the same class, drawn by one horse, capable of accommodating more than three persons, including the driver; consequently, when a party exceeds two, a *calèche* and pair becomes necessary if they wish to be together. Therefore, mounting into one of these, we drive off through one pretty street after another—now, in one old-fashioned and narrow, gently undulating over hill and valley; then across a handsome square, from which broad streets diverge, garnished with shops and shady avenues, where Parisian-looking children play "les graces;"

and little, toddling, wee things essay their first run into the out-stretched arms of smiling nurses—where French and English *bonnes*, and picturesque Carmiltzoë, in their national garb, walk side by side in friendly converse; followed by ladies of the great world, and by military dons, scuffing along in their goloshes, and still hugging their grey manteaux—it is extraordinary what chilly mortals the Russians are.

Everywhere we encounter gardens and open squares, and feathery foliage decks every street; for almost every house has its garden, and this is one of the chief embellishments of this beautiful city. And here also are the four-horse coaches so common in Petersburg, and all the usual variety of the droschkii genus; but here comes a machine, the like of which we have certainly never seen before. It is a summer omnibus, and most sensibly adapted to summer wants; indeed, even in our murky ever-dripping capital, it might be imitated with advantage, at least for gentlemen who indulge in smoking and fresh air. This omnibus is evidently an adaptation from a Russian vehicle of the jaunting-car kind, called a *lean* or *lineker*, where the company sit *dos-à-dos*, the side to the horses. The nearest simile is to take a London omnibus, knock out the sides, windows and all, and run a partition up the middle of it to the roof, cushion this parti-

tion on both sides, and provide it with ranges of seats, with an oil-skin apron to protect the lower man from the dust or rain, and a narrow fringe of pendent drapery from the edge of the roof, with the usual accompaniment of driver and "cad" in their usual places—but with the unusual arrangement of three horses abreast—and the turn-out is complete. With our draught-fearing and omnibus-travelling population, such an improvement on the old plan might be worth consideration, and a clean, comfortable, and comparatively private conveyance thus provided—at least for summer wants.

But we draw up before the door of a seigneurial-looking mansion.

"Elizavetta Petrovna dom?" asked the Countess of the tiniest specimen of a page-boy I had ever beheld, and who appeared on the imperious ring of our Petersburg servant, who, probably by way of showing off his Petersburg training, had given this, the first bell in Moscow which he had the honour of pulling, an extra stretch. "Domus!" shrieked out the shrillest and most unearthly voice that had ever met my ear, and on looking again at that minute atom of humanity, I perceived deep wrinkles in his little forehead, and furrows in his puffy cheeks. He was a perfectly well-proportioned little man, thirty years of age at the least—a dwarf, scarcely higher than

his small Excellency General Tom Thumb. To this tiny messenger the Countess delivered her card, and ere he could have crossed the vestibule, a tall, bright-eyed, elegant woman, attired in a simple morning costume, and with the most coquettish of little caps on her head, appeared on the stairs.

"Ekaterina Petrovna!" were the only words she could utter ere our matron had descended, and the two old school-fellows* were locked in a close embrace. With their eyes full of tears, their faces full of smiles, and their hearts probably filled with a thousand happy associations, they walked off upstairs, leaving all the *dramatis personæ* around, looking exceedingly puzzled, and eyeing each other. The dwarf looked at us, and we at him, and so we sat for several minutes, until a good-looking footman, in neatly-trimmed moustache and black suit, made his descent from the portico steps, begging that the party would alight and enter.

The fact was, the Countess had found her friend, and as that friend happened to be standing near her *boudoir* window when we drove up, she had instantly — notwithstanding their long separation — recognized her old *amie;*

* These ladies had made their sortie at the Catherine Institute together, and consequently were sisters in affection for life; they had not seen each other for twelve years.

and acting only from the warm impulse of her kind heart, she rushed at once to receive her. We, Peterburgher *habitués*, were all the more astonished at this very *unfashionable* mode of proceeding, but all *felt* the natural beauty of the graceful act.

Arriving *en haut*, we passed through a succession of splendid apartments to an inner one, where sat the two old friends on a *canapé*, and at some distance, four elegant, timid-looking, pretty girls, clustered in a group behind a flower-screen, as if half afraid to encounter the coming host of high-bred, travelled Peterburghers.

These were the daughters of Ekaterina Petrovna, who might have well passed for their elder sister, the eldest being about eighteen, and the youngest perhaps twelve. And, having been duly introduced to each other, we paired off, falling into interesting conversation; the elder of the young ladies communicating with me in English scarcely marked by foreign accent or mistake, while her sisters chatted with my friends in their native Russ, not a little to our surprise and gratification, so unaccustomed had we been to this practice in young girls of the other capital, who generally speak French.

While we sat talking, my position afforded me the view of a long perspective of apartments, at the other end of which a comical scene presented

itself: there was the dwarf, struggling along with a candelabrum, and tottering under its weight like a tipsy man. Every two or three paces he set it down to rest himself, evidently much overcome by the exertion, repeatedly wiping his brow with his pocket-handkerchief. It was impossible to repress a smile; Mademoiselle de B—— was also amused, and on expressing a desire to know how the manikin had reached the end of his journey —for we lost sight of him as he penetrated one of the apartments—she proposed that we should go and see.

We found him in an absolute "fix," concentrating every effort to place the candelabrum on a side-table; more than once he lost his balance, and but for the helping hand of his graceful young mistress, the ornament would have been on the floor, and he on the top of it.

"Why do you carry these heavy things, Antoinchka?" said Mademoiselle de B——.

"But Antoinchka* wished to do it. Peter told him not to," said the dwarf, in reply, speaking of himself in the third person, and with a deprecatory air and tone; "but Antoinchka must help his fellow-servants." The ambitious little serving-man (?) then set off, with tiny "pit pat," across the

* Antoinchka is the diminutive of Antoin, but he always spoke of himself as the smallest of created things.

room, rather crest-fallen at the failure of his project.

This Russian "Tom Thumb" was thirty years of age, the son of full-grown and rather good-looking parents, both serfs, belonging to the Government of Moscow. He was the most faithful creature in the world, and, what is rather unusual with dwarfs, good tempered; most devoted to the family and to his fellow servants, who are, in turn, all much attached to him, and with difficulty they allow him to do anything; and only when he steals a march upon them—as in the case of the candelabrum—does he ever get the opportunity; there was one office, however, that he would yield to none, and which was tacitly given up to him, and that was to carry the letters, or notes of invitation, to post. On such occasions, though virtually the bearer, he was always accompanied by a servant, to prevent his being insulted or roughly handled by the boys in the streets.

Antoinchka never had a day's illness in his life. About nine years ago, he fell desperately in love with a pretty German maid in the family, but she was a coquette, and jilted him, and he vowed never to lose another thought on the sex thereafter, and is supposed to have kept his word.

Dwarfs, and even fools, were once very common

about the houses of the ancient Muscovites; both are occasionally to be met with still, and in St. Petersburg they are by no means rare. One, belonging to a lady there, is very little taller than the famous Tom Thumb, and quite as agreeable-looking. A family with whom I am acquainted in Moscow, had two dwarfs, brother and sister; the former was presented to the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovitch, in whose palace he had a right merry time of it. On a festive occasion, not very long ago, he was served up in a covered pie. "And when the pie was opened"—not the blackbirds, but—"The dwarf began to sing," to the great astonishment and amusement of everybody. This dwarf died at thirty years of age, and his sister—who, during his *séjour* at court, had resided with the family of her master—on hearing of his death, pined away from that day, and in six months after followed him to the grave. Fools, or jesters, wear a ridiculous dress, but dwarfs usually appear in plain clothes.

During our visit, the only son of Ekaterina Petrovna made his appearance; he was an engineer officer, about twenty years of age, and considerately proposed to escort us in our explorations about his native city. His mother having sent off our hired vehicle, had ordered her own for the use of the party, which immediately took possession of a soft luxurious britska, of large size,

drawn by four black steeds, which conveyed us with delightful rapidity to the Gastinoë Dvor, in order to make the acquaintance of a *protegé* of our handsome escort's.

CHAPTER V.

Liberals—Russians and Germans—Learned Furrier—Sables—£900 for a Winter Cloak!—A Beautiful and Useful Manufacture—Silk Mercers—Water Supply—A Lowly Grave—Peter's Play-ground—The Love Match—The Tombs of the Tzars—Martha Romanoff—Touching incident in the Lives of Two Brothers—The Treasury of the Kreml—John the Terrible, the Suitor of Queen Elizabeth of England—Lady Mary Hastings—The Queen's Peace Offering.

Our new acquaintance, Vladimir Ivanovitch, was anxious that we should visit the University, but we were obliged to content ourselves with a hurried glance *en passant.* This establishment is one of several of the same magnitude, and of the same general excellent arrangements which are to be met with in different parts of Russia—two of the principal of which are those of St. Petersburg and Helsingfors. The education is of a very superior—because of a very useful—kind. Many foreigners are educated at these

Universities, and more than one scion of young "go-ahead" America is indebted to them for a "first-rate" education. But, of all these establishments put together, Moscow turns out the greatest number of liberals. The young Vladimir is one of these. He is proud of the growing greatness of his country, and of the Tzar and the Imperial family; and he thinks, in common with all Russians, that, for high attainments and handsome appearance, there is not such another family, high or low, in all Europe—few foreigners will dispute it. But this young "liberal" frowned on the Peterburghers as being anti-national, the adopters of foreign languages, manners, and customs, and the encouragers of foreign manufactures to the disparagement of their own. He, and his school, seem to be especially jealous of the German element, which, as a matter of necessity as well as of justice, is largely diffused through the empire, and he repeated, with many emphases, the story of a Russian noble, who having done something to evoke the gratitude of the Emperor Alexander I., the monarch enquired what he could do for him?

"Make me a German, please your Majesty, and everything else will follow, as a matter of course," was the reply of the noble.

Almost the precise words of the Englishman, under similar circumstances, to James I. of

England—some say George III.—whose English courtiers, jealous of the new Scottish element infused into the land, resented it in similar terms.

But it is certain antagonistic elements in a nation that constitute its strength; and however much the Russians may dislike the elevation of their fellow-subjects of Teuton extraction, they could do little without them in positions of responsibility. The roving, pleasure-loving, improvident Russian could never "stick" close and perseveringly to the grave business of thought and hard work, as the German subjects of the Tzar do. For the educated Russians are not deep thinkers like the Germans; they rather resemble our Irish emeralds—sparkling, facetious, witty, eloquent, full of heart, fun, and "sun-burst." Therefore the Germans are of precisely the same advantage to Russia that the Scotch are to England—steady, thoughtful, persevering, provident, they keep in check their more mercurial neighbours, and are ever reminding me of a pair of carriage horses with which I am intimately acquainted, called "Banker" and "Johnny,"—the former is all dash and impetuosity, ready to do his duty at one leap, and be done with it. In the midst of the gravest journey, even on the edge of a precipice or water-fall, he is full of his pranks and fun, and, but for his steady colleague, would be for ever in a scrape; while the latter is alive only to his duty—sober, self-reliant, and

thoughtful; he draws always at the same pace, never turns a hair of his sleek coat by enthusiastic exertion, performs wonders with ease — for the coachman often yields up to him the reins while he takes a nap — and returns home, after a heavy journey, almost as hearty as when he set out; eats his supper and goes to bed "all right;" while his colleague is covered with foam from useless starting and plunging, heedless of whip or rein, and only restrained by the husbanded strength of his grave old friend; completely exhausted, he is unable to sup, and, very un-horse-like, puts himself to bed on his side; playing the invalid for several days to the great inconvenience of a whole family.

The young Vladimir laughed at this simile, but he acknowledged its applicability, nevertheless.

We now alight at one of the 860 shops of the famous Gastinoë Dvor. It is a furrier's—a good-looking man, in the prime of his days, comes forward with a graceful slide, and a bow, and a smile, and opens the door from within. He wears the national caftan and beard, and his hair is parted down the middle of his head, and he altogether looks exactly like what our fashionable "men about town" may be supposed to look in their dressing-gowns—for the style of the *chevelure* and beard of both are the same, and, in conjunction with a flowing garb like the caftan, is highly becoming.

This furrier is intelligent; he speaks German and French fluently, and appeared "well up" in the literature of both. He is, besides, a first-rate Sclavonic scholar, and possesses some valuable manuscripts in that language, as well as several exquisitely illuminated works on parchment, which are very old. He was very particular in explaining the difference in the dressing of Russian and foreign furs. It appears that the Russians re-dress all furs that they import. This magazine seemed to be the head depôt of fine furs. Here were Russian sables at a truly imperial price, but of a quality one rarely sees exposed for sale out of Russia. Sable of different kinds is the fur most in vogue with the nobility for cloak linings. The next in favour is fox. But the very *beau ideal* of good taste and extravagance in the way of a winter luxury of this kind is a plain dark velvet or brocade exterior, with a sable lining and a collar (or rather small cape) of silver grey fox. I have seen such a cloak, the lining composed of sable tails—the cost of which was 900 guineas! A very common price for a winter cloak, among both sexes of the nobility, is £100. A superlative fox lining may be purchased at from ten to sixteen guineas, and a rich Siberian squirrel, with the fur long, thick, and soft, and consisting of about 200 skins, for five guineas. Inferior fur of this description is much used to line the winter great

coats of footmen, and is proportionably cheaper. The English generally have an idea that the Russian in his winter garb is a moving mountain of fur. Nothing can be more erroneous. Scarcely is fur to be seen but in the collar of the cloak or mantle, the narrow strip round the cap of the priest or child, and round the sledge-covers; though a few of these are used with the bear's fur outside—as also are the hammer-covers. All Russians, from the Tzar to the poorest peasant, wear the fur side of their winter wraps next to the person.

Thence, we proceeded to a magazine, gay as a flower garden in its bloom, full of all kinds of articles made of felt, from the delicate white boot of a lady to a portable bath. This manufacture has attained great perfection, and is acquiring considerable renown. The prettiest things are made of it, such as vases, jugs, toilet sets, candlesticks, waiters, baskets, card-racks, fire-screens, foot and other baths, &c. They are light, and will bear a great deal of rough usage without cracking, for they do not break. The felt appears to be covered with some composition which hardens like clay; upon this any design may be painted, and the whole polished. Foreigners in St. Petersburg patronise this new and elegant ware very largely. It is most valuable in a nursery for instance, instead of crockery-ware,

from which so many accidents arise by its being broken.

And then we enter a carpet warehouse, and find a great variety of manufactures under this head, of all imaginable designs. The imitations of Brussels and Venetian make were wonderfully even and correct as to design, for so young a branch of Russian industrial art.

Our next visit was to a silkmercer's, where the silks and brocades surprised us by their beauty; as well as ribbons of all shades and widths. The Russians have attained a high degree of perfection in their brilliant and delicate colours; scarlet, Turkey-red, crimsons, and blues more particularly. Some of their lighter woollen fabrics, printed in these colours, are superb; and I know as a fact, that a lady, wearing one of these in London, was constantly interrogated as to where she had purchased her "beautiful dress." The Russian velvets, with cotton backs, are also a very superior manufacture. The colours are good, and they are very durable. For cloaks, as warm "hack" wraps, they are very much used. The best of them are about 4s. 6d. per yard.

And now we whirl off to the far-famed Donskoë, our young guide enlightening us meanwhile as to the manner in which the inhabitants of Moscow are supplied with water, which is curious enough. At a place called Muiteetzui, half way

to the Troitzka Monastery—and therefore between twenty and thirty versts out of Moscow—a curious phenomenon occurred in the reign of Catherine II. A violent storm burst over this part of the country, and upwards of fifty springs suddenly gushed out at this place. These are the "pools of Solomon" on a large scale. Catherine caused the water of these springs to be conveyed to Moscow in pipes. Before this, Moscow had no other certain supply than that derived from the little Moskva.

The most interesting monastery in Moscow—its historical associations considered, coupled with the perfection of the chanting—is certainly the Donskoë. On the spot now occupied by this edifice was fought one of the most obstinate battles of former days. Geerie, the Tartar Khan of the Crimea, invaded Russia, and having penetrated the country as far as Moscow, attacked the Russians in their capital. Theodore Ivanovitch was then Great Prince, and, being a very pious man he ordered the picture of the Virgin Mary (that had been presented to Demitri Ivanovitch by the Don Kossacks), to be brought from its sanctuary, and placed in the Forum. Here before it, and in the midst of his soldiers and people, the Prince offered up his prayers to God. This inspired them with so much faith in Divine protection that they fought with such determination that the

Tartars fled; the Russians pursued, and were almost cut to pieces, a mere fragment returning home. Theodore founded this fine monastery on the spot where the Tartar Geerie met his repulse, and dedicated it to the Virgin of the Don Kossakii, commonly called the Donskoë. In the cemetery of the Donskoë are the tombs of the great families of Galitzin and Dolgorookie, and among them that of a common soldier; a low monument supports a casque and sword, covered with a glass shade, and on one side of the monument is written, "Ivan Troffimoff, Grenadier. His friends have raised this monument to the memory of one honourable and brave."

One of these numerous Galitzins has foun ded a public hospital in Moscow, which, with another of the same kind built and endowed by Count Sheremetieff, is a most noble institution. These establishments are each provided with a full staff of medical officers, who are munificently paid. As many as 300 indoor patients can be accommodated. Foreigners as well as natives are received here, no matter what their complaints; and the aged remain for life. There is, besides, a host of outdoor patients. This is charity in its most extended sense!

About seven versts from Moscow is an interesting place called Kolomensky, where are several

antiquities, particularly two very old churches built in the fourteenth century, the walls of which are eight feet thick, the doors studded with immense nails, and the windows extremely small, and protected with thick iron bars; the whole surrounded, as usual, by a wall of tremendous thickness.

In this neighbourhood—which is particularly interesting, being so intimately connected with Peter the Great—are the remains of the palace of Alexie Michaëlovitch, the father of Peter, which the French destroyed in 1812. But, like the good deeds of the excellent, which live for ever, one memento of this respected Tzar is still left. This is a stone pillar, with an iron box on the top of it, which is situated near the window of what had been the *cabinet de travail* of this good and wise man. Into a slit in the lid of the box the people were accustomed to drop their communications or petitions. The Tzar opened it every morning, and replied to its contents with his own hand.

Near this is a great stone chair, which was Alexie's favourite seat. He was a great admirer of the beauties of nature, and hereabouts the banks of the Moskva are very picturesque. For hours he used to sit, in the glorious summer evenings, enjoying the delicious air, and watching his little son at play. In a meadow close by, two

umbrageous old oaks are still standing, under the shade of which the boy-general exercised his embryo regiments, the now "crack" "Bréobréjensky" and "Simionsky."

Returning to Moscow, we repair to the Kreml, and within its walls we follow our intelligent companion to the "Terema" the winter residence of the rulers of Russia, prior to Peter the Great, whose father resided here, and where he was born. The chapel attached to this palace is, next to that of Our Lady of Eversky, the most ancient and revered. It is called "the Saviour behind the golden grille," and is the sanctuary of a celebrated picture of the Virgin brought from Jerusalem. This chapel is known outside by nine small cupolas, and was for the exclusive use of the sovereign and his family. The robes of the priests who officiated were always embroidered by the Empress and the ladies of the Imperial family, and were of the most elaborate and gorgeous description. There is also a private chapel for the Empress, and one for the use of the subordinate lady-members of the Imperial house.

The internal arrangements of the Terema are comfortable, and as simple as it is possible to conceive. How easy to realise the interesting story of Natalie Narishkin and the great Alexie, and of the plain and unostentatious habits of that good Emperor's life, while thus gazing upon these

simple concomitants of their home! How strangely and vividly such links bring before one the most eventful transactions of a past age! This history of Alexie's courtship is so characteristic of the sublimity of simplicity, that, even at the risk of its being pronounced a digression, I must insert it here—on the very spot of its consummation.

A curious custom still exists in some parts of Russia, according to which the Russian "lords of the creation," high and low, used to select their wives. The mode of operation was this. The Russian women before Peter's time were so secluded that they had no opportunity of communicating with those of the other sex. A medium of introduction therefore became necessary, and this auxiliary, generally a witch-like old woman—of whom there were several in every village—ran about from house to house, making the acquaintance of its inmates for matrimonial purposes. These old dames could reckon on their fingers all the pretty portionless girls, ugly heiresses, and "eligible" bachelors for miles round. But as the parents then, as now, had the first and last word on this momentous subject, the negotiation was generally conducted exclusively by them and the match-maker. Those most concerned occasionally put in a word edgeways, however, when they discovered what was

on the *tapis*, such as "Find me a rich bride, matoushka," or, on the other side, "Matoushka dushinka—old mother, dear—bring me a bride-groom with blue eyes and red hair." After a long and diplomatic negotiation, the auspicious day at length arrives when the parties are to meet. For this purpose a public, though retired, place is chosen as a *rendezvous*, and there all the marriageable girls in the country, town, or village, assemble. Whit-Monday is this Russian St. Valentine's, or pairing day. The match-makers arrange their respective charges to the best advantage—generally in one long row—all brilliant in their national and costly full dress, the seraphâu. The marrying men then saunter carelessly up to them, endeavouring to look as innocent as if seeking for a wife was the last thing in the imagination of either of them, while the maidens, with trembling hearts and downcast eyes, dare not look up, to hazard even a conjecture as to who, among the advancing beaux, may be the chosen of their parents. The mothers and the match-makers stand close behind their respective brides, thus affording the suitors a clue to the identification of the particular fair one, about whom they had been negotiating. After this fashion, Alexie, the Tzar, made known to the beautiful Natalie Narishkin that she was the object of his choice.

The particulars of this love-match are thus described in the Russian history before alluded to.

"Who is that lovely young woman who looks with so much love on the infant Peter as he lies in his cradle? It is by no means difficult to guess that; she is the young wife of the Emperor Alexie, and the happy mother of Peter! The mother of Peter! What honor for a woman! How interesting must be the story of her life!—of every incident that relates to her! This is not the first wife of Alexie, known to us by the name of Mary. No! she died in 1669, and the Tzar is again married. Let us forget that Peter is born, and suppose the period when Alexie's first wife died, even she with whom he had lived so long and happily. The poor Emperor has soon after this to mourn the death of his first-born, Alexie, a youth of sixteen. But, in the midst of all his family sorrows, he never neglected one public duty, or made the least difference in his wise arrangements for the general good.* The traiterous friendship of a nobleman named Morokoff, made him early careful in selecting his

* This great man did much for his country. He greatly increased its commerce; built Nerginsk and Irkutsk, in Siberia, to trade with China; revised the laws; established a mint; founded the first university at Moscow; and laid the foundation of other reforms which his son Peter carried out.

friends and counsellors. Long he sought for one true and faithful, with whom he might share the fatigues of government, and at length he selected Artamân Matvêyeff, in whom he found so much to admire and esteem, that the Tzar, always happy in his society, often visited him in his own house.

"Two years thus passed, and the Tzar began to regain something of his former health and spirits. One evening Alexie called on his counsellor later than usual, and found him about sitting down to supper. The Tzar, seeing his friend embarrassed, told him, with a smile, that he had arrived *apropos*, and should stay and sup with him; but no difference was to be made in the family arrangements; everyone must occupy his accustomed place. Accordingly, as soon as the table was covered, Artamân's wife entered, followed by their son and a young girl. The Tzar looked at his host with some surprise, never having heard that his friend had a daughter. But his surprise increased on perceiving the beauty of the maiden. According to the custom of those days, she spoke but little, but that little was said so sensibly, and with so much modesty, that the Tzar could not withdraw his eyes from her. When the repast was ended, and the ladies had retired, the Tzar asked Artamân the name of his beautiful daughter. Alexie then learned that she was only the adopted

child of his friend; that her father, a poor noble called Narishkin, lived at his small estate all the year round, remote from society; he was therefore grateful to his relative Artamân for taking the little Natalie. Artamân and his wife loved her as their own, and had procured the best education for her — indeed such a one as only the first ladies in the land could enjoy in those days. Her mind was beautiful as her person. The good Artamân often admired her, and felt that God, who had helped him to bring her thus far on life's journey prosperously, would assist them farther in disposing of her hand to one who would appreciate her goodness, sense, and education, more than her wealth. All this the artless Artamân related to the Emperor, who appeared desirous of learning the particulars of her history and prospects.

"On taking leave, the Tzar told Artamân that he should consider what he had heard, and that he should try and find a husband for the good Natalie.

"He did think about it, and imagine to whom he designed to wed her?—To himself! Yes, the modest daughter of Narishkin pleased Alexie; and feeling satisfied that she must be good as well as sensible, coming from under the roof of Artamân, that same week the Tzar presented himself again at the dwelling of his friend, and demanded his

adopted daughter in marriage. The amazement of Artamân may well be conceived; at first he fancied he had not heard aright, but on the request being repeated by the Tzar, his master, he fell on his knees, and besought him not to think of such an alliance, as the consequences to Natalie might be serious, from the jealousy of the already envious courtiers, who looked with suspicion on the visits of the Tzar to the house of a subject, for hitherto such an event was unheard of. But the Emperor raised his friend, and, embracing him, soothed him with the assurance that he would shield Natalie from their malice, and protect him who had proved so true and faithful to himself.

"Agreeably to the wish of Artamân, the Emperor did not make known to Natalie the honour in store for her, and it was arranged he should select his bride according to the custom.

"Public notice was therefore given to all the noble, wealthy, and beautiful daughters of the land to repair to the Terema, for the Tzar Alexie Michaëlovitch was about to choose a Tzaritza from their ranks. On the day appointed, crowds of the young and lovely flocked towards the Palace. All Moscow, and all the land, was astir; he, the beloved of the people, who had so long been a mourner, bowed down with sorrow, rejoiced once more, and this was his bridal day. Among this

lovely crowd of the noblest beauties of that day, appeared Natalie Narishkin, led by the wife of Artamân. As with downcast look and modest mien, that young girl ascended to the ancient Terema, she asked herself the reason why she, poor, and of comparatively humble sphere, should thus be mingling among the great and the wealthy daughters of Russia, from among whom was to be chosen the future Empress of all the land?

"The wife of Artamân could have answered this question, and, but for the peremptory commands of her husband, must have divulged the secret, which, as may be supposed, gave her infinite trouble to keep. But the Tzar was not long in making known his choice, and then the proud mother poured out to her child the whole story of the arrangements that had been made on her account that day.

"Natalie, arrayed in the Imperial robes, was presented to the assembled courtiers as their future Tzarina; and then also she learned for the first time, and from the Tzar himself, how great had been his love for her at 'first sight.'

"The marriage of Alexie, the son of Michael, with Natalie Narishkin, took place on the 25th of June, 1671, and on the 30th of May, 1672—a day ever memorable to Russia—Peter was born."

From the Terema we proceeded to the cathe-

dral of Michael the Archangel, for the express purpose of seeing one of its most interesting and singular features, viz., the tombs of the Tzars. This cathedral was founded by John, the son of Daniel, whose remains were the first to repose here. Before this, the rulers of Russia do not appear to have had any exclusive place of burial. Some of the great princes lie in St. Sophia of Novgorod; others in different monasteries. Before the accession of the Romanoffs, the burial place of the family was the celebrated Nova-spanskoë, one of the most interesting suburban religious establishments of Moscow. There repose the almost sacred remains of that pious Martha, whose repugnance to yield up her darling son a youthful sacrifice to public duty—though the reward was an empire, and the title that of Tzar!—could not be over-ruled by any earthly consideration. With that almost child—Michael, the first of the Romanoffs—by her side, the two went forth to meet the deputation of the people, who had elected him their sovereign. Like a second Queen Catherine, she pleaded her cause in words of fire, yielding not an inch of her vantage ground, till the great dignitaries of that church she so much revered surrounded them with their holy pictures and relics of the saints, and Theodoretus, the Archimandrite, read aloud, from Holy Writ, those startling words, "The

voice of the people is the voice of God." Then only was this Spartan mother overcome, and with tears and trembling she delivered to them her young and cherished child. Beside this great woman lie her four sons and her eldest daughter, the beautiful Irene, whose history is like a wonderful romance, from its beginning to its close. Other members of this family are buried in the Monastery of the Ascension, and in the Cathedral of the Assumption, both of which are in the Kreml.

The tombs of the Tzars in the Cathedral of the Archangel are small blocks covered with crimson velvet, the name of the deceased monarch, and the date of his death, being attached to each on a small metal plate. These tombs were in old times objects of great veneration; they were often made the media of the suppliant subject, to the reigning monarch; for a petition deposited on the tomb of a Tzar could only be removed by the reigning one. This was deemed a means of supplication so solemn that it met with immediate attention.

The most splendid of the Kreml churches is the Cathedral of the Assumption; it was built in the fifteenth century, by John III., or Great. The Russian sovereigns are crowned in this edifice.

It is also the exclusive last resting-place of the great dignitaries of the church, as that of the

Cathedral of Archangel has been of the Tzars. This edifice is also the sanctuary of that most revered picture of the Virgin of Vladimir, which was presented by the Greek Emperor, Emmanuel Comnenus, to the Princess Eudoxie, and which is said to have been painted by St. Luke. Here also lies Philaretes Nequites, one of the great fathers of the Church; and by his side, that Philip, the Metropolitan of Moscow, who dared to address John the Terrible thus:—"As God's anointed ruler of this empire, we respect thee; but, as a man, thou art but dust and ashes!" Here also, on the 21st of February, 1613, came the chiefs of cities; of the Strelezzi; the Hetman of the Cossacks; the great functionaries; the dignitaries of the church; nobles; children of Boyards; merchants, *negociants*, and tradesmen—in all, a mighty conclave—to seek God's blessing on their free and independent act—the election of the young Michael Romanoff—then little more than seventeen. This great assembly came here to pray, previous to sending its deputation to Martha and her son to inform them of their election, and to offer a crown as the price of her cherished boy.

But this sacred edifice is rendered still more hallowed by the consummation of an act to which the history of the world can offer no parallel. Again the actors are Romanoffs, but the date is of

our time. Again this imposing cathedral is filled to overflowing, but they are not all Russians, as before. All the civilised powers of the known world have representatives there. Our own "Iron Duke" is among them. The religious ceremony of the coronation had just concluded. The *Te Deum* still filled the sacred edifice. The *feu de joie* of the roaring cannon shook the foundations of the Kreml. The great bell of Ivan Veleckie struck out, giving the signal to all the bells in Moscow to unite their voices in chimes of congratulation to the newly-anointed Tzar. That magnificent young monarch, who, in his perfect majesty and extreme beauty of person, looked more like a demi-god than a mortal man, occupied the throne of diamonds.* The most illustrious in the empire defile before him, bending the knee in dutiful homage. But suddenly, every eye in that august assembly turns from the monarch to the kneeler at his feet, for there, lowly bending like the rest, is Constantine, that elder brother who, with a generosity unheard of, has made over the throne and all its attendant honours to that younger brother who now adorns, rather than is adorned by, that crown, thus placed upon his brow; and who, in his turn, with a nobility of

* The throne of diamonds was given by the Armenians to Alexie, the father of Peter the Great. It is thickly studded with fine pearls and precious stones.

soul only equalled by that of Constantine, had long and earnestly refused to wear the honours of that elder's birthright, yielding at last more to the gentle entreaties of his angelic mother, than either to the commands of his brother the Tzar, or to the importunities of Constantine. But on beholding that brother now on his knee before him, the young Nicholas was so much overcome, that, forgetting the monarch in the man, he fell on his brother's neck and wept! Every eye there was bedimmed with a tear, while every heart throbbed with emotion. By this consummating grace, this touching episode in the lives of these Imperial brothers is encircled by a halo which elevates it to one of the sublimest acts that ever was enacted among men; and which, had it transpired in the Homeric age, would have been said and sung at the present day as a heaven-born tale; meet exploit for the gods, but impossible to sublunary man.

We were desirous of visiting the Monastery of Andrevioff, the bells of which are very fine; also that of St. Simeon, which is a great favourite; the church, too, of St. Martin the Confessor, which is reckoned the finest in Moscow. But to become acquainted with all the monasteries, cathedrals, churches, and palaces, in and around Moscow, would occupy a lifetime. A feature common to Russian monasteries—and I

suppose it is the same in the Greek, of which they are a reflex—is the *risnitza*, or treasury. This risnitza is an apartment, or series of them, used as the *depôt* for all the relics, jewels, holy vessels, and such like wealth, belonging to each. Indeed, every family may be said to have its treasury, from the Emperor, with his accumulated relics of ages, down to the poorest serf, whose little corner altar is decked out with a solitary picture and a few Easter eggs. Some of these treasuries of the more wealthy monasteries are veritable "halls of dazzling light;" that of the famous Troitza, for instance, where the risnitza occupies ten halls. There are several others also in the suburbs of Moscow, whose wealth in unset jewels may be measured like corn by bushels, and where some of the priestly robes, literally sewn with gems, are "worth a king's ransom!" But the risnitza, or museum—as it is often translated—of the Kreml, embraces a more extended catalogue of interesting objects—the collected riches of centuries, from the crown of the famous Vladimir Monomachus—grand-son of Constantine Monomachus, Emperor of Greece, and the first Russian ruler who wore a crown—to that magnificent diadem worn by the last crowned of the Romanoffs. Here are thrones of gold and of diamonds, one of which is covered with rubies, turquoises, and pearls, and orbs, sceptres, and *varmæ*—or collars—

all inlaid with gems, besides thousands of the robes of the clergy from the earliest days of Christianity to the present time—as well as the mitres and other head-gear belonging to them—hundreds of which are embroidered in jewels, sewn with as lavish a hand as if they were as many glass beads. Here is also a multitude of carriages, of all conceivable shapes, the largest and clumsiest of which attracted our particular attention, for thereby "hung a tale." It is a great gilded, bedaubed waggon, occupying much valuable space, and said to require a dozen horses to move it. This was a peace-offering from Queen Elizabeth of England to John the Terrible of Russia; the story connected with which is sufficiently interesting, but we do not appear to possess any record of the transactions, or any reference to the delicate nature of these negotiations between the English Queen and this first Tzar of all the Russias. The account is to be met with in the life of one Theodore Pisemsky, a Russian nobleman of family, and highly distinguished as the greatest diplomatist of his time. The narrative goes on to say, that, after having conducted important negotiations in the Crimea and in Poland with Stephen Battori, Pisemsky visited London on behalf of his master, the Tzar Ivan Vasilovitch, who made the spinster queen an offer of his hand, which Elizabeth politely refused. The ambassador of John was then in-

structed to seek among the ladies of the Court for one likely to suit him, and, with great good taste, Pisemsky selected the Lady Mary Hastings. Lady Mary, however, was frightened at the idea of going so far from home, even to become an Empress, and therefore, to propitiate the Russian monarch, Elizabeth sent him the newest invention and the greatest luxury of the age—this great lumbering waggon!

"And if your Elizabeth had married our John the Terrible," said the young Vladimir, looking rather archly at me, "the world would never have wept the tragedy of Marie Stuart."

"But, perhaps, an Elizabethan one, instead," I retorted.

CHAPTER VI.

Mal de Chemin—Terrestrial Gulfs—Extempore Bridges—Drive in a Corn-field—Convoy in Distress—Bronitza—Taking the Bull by the Horns—Sleep in the Streets—A Country Inn at Sun-rise—*Tableaux Dormants*—Peripatetics of a New School—Vocal Military Band—Ungallant Tcherkessians—Making Butter in a Bottle—Another "Fix"—Process of Extrication—Riazan—Hospitable Welcome—Impromptu Beds *à la* Russe.

BIDDING adieu to the glorious and revered old city—never more superb than at that moment, all radiant as she glittered beneath the rays of a post-meridian sun—to her picturesque suburbs, and above all other considerations just then, to the Imperial *chaussée*, which had rendered our journey hitherto easy as a trip of pleasure. It had rained for the last two days in this immediate neighbourhood, and consequently the mud-track into which we plunged, after bidding adieu to the pavement

of the streets, presented so many holes, so many hills and dales, and yawning gulfs, that it was utterly impossible for our cavalry to proceed beyond snail's pace. Of all the rugged highways and by-ways of our experience, this threatened to prove the most rugged of them all! Nothing in the world did our family-coach so much resemble as a tub of a vessel, deeply laden, twisting, and straining, and labouring in a stiff gale; ever and anon threatening those within with the awkward catastrophe of an overthrow on her beam ends. Nor was that ever-faithful attendant on the wheels of a travelling-carriage in Russia, viz., the nautical smell of pitch, wanting to complete the idea. Now we were tossed forward, and then back, or, in Punch's style, by an extraordinary side-stroke, my companion and I were knocked into each other. "Pardon" involuntarily escapes us after every such plunge, but it is "pardon" for ever, and bump, and twist, and strain, and drag on. I wondered what term an English coachman would have applied to these primitive ways, as now rising over the harder mud-ruts, we sunk in the gullies between; for "heavy" would no more have applied here, than "rough" would to the Atlantic in a tempest. And of this—unless it mended its ways as we advanced—we had four hundred and fifty-five versts and three-quarters in perspective.

At length, after toiling over an unusually long stage of twenty-nine versts and three-quarters, we reached a village called Ostrofzi, or the Isles, from several picturesque islands in its neighbourhood.

Changing horses at this place, we started, to combat the miry tract anew, which, as we progressed, certainly grew worse. Several awful holes had been safely passed, by plucking down branches and filling them up therewith, and so forming a kind of bridge; but to carry out this process at every hole we came to was out of the question. A corn-field flanked the road, and some one proposed the treasonable project of driving in it to avoid the holes.

Through this field, therefore—which seemed a green world without a limit, and heavy enough, too—the men drove at a brisk trot, keeping up the energy of the bow-backed cattle with the strangest medley of yells and shouts, and with the rattle of the accumulation of reins about their ears; the driver of the convoy appealing to the worst passions of his charges by the disheartening ebullitions of "Pagan that thou art," "Noo, rascals," "The devil thrash thee," while our happy "lemona brida" sang through it all, occasionally staying his song to coax on his weary troïka by a persuasive "Noo poscurrie, moë goloob-she-ky"—Now push on, my darling doves—or to tickle their

ears with the loose reins, instead of the whip,* now resuming his song, which appeared to us all, "both beasts and bodies," more soothing and persuasive than anything else.

Our route—still in the corn-field—runs along the banks of a clear deep stream, upon which the last rays of the departing sun gleam with auriferous richness, while every now and then large fish leap out of the sparkling waters, entrapping flies; the river appears to team with them. Our three "darling doves" approach the stream, and at a shallow, indented, little bay, running up a few feet into the field, they are permitted to walk in

* Russian drivers seldom use, or even carry, a whip, though some of the poor yesoosgicks keep one, as some mammas do a cane, more to look at, and by way of prevention, than for actual use. It is the most amusing thing in the world to watch some of these good-tempered fellows as they drive along the streets of the cities, threatening a sulky horse with their apology for a whip. The unblinkered eyes of the animal leave him at perfect liberty to watch the movements of his master from behind, and the least hitch of the latter, or attempt to get out the whip, sets him off at increased speed. If this *ruse* does not succeed, then there is a real search for this terrible instrument of torture—a birch twig, with a bit of tangled bass or hemp by way of lash—for being seldom used, it is really often mislaid. Now he looks among his feet for it, or he raises the little cushion upon which he sits, and not unfrequently he pulls it from down his sleeve, and flourishing it about with uplifted arm, he holds it thus aloft in all its naked awfulness before the eyes—though behind the back—of his sulky horse. And be sure he is a regular *mauvais sujet* of an animal that will not be persuaded to do his duty after this terrible demonstration.

and cool their fetlocks, and to "drink while they may." But night draws near; already the convoy looks like a black cloud in the distance, and gathering up his reins, our merry Yemschick mounts his box, and pitching a new song in a plaintive minor, he shakes away, while the refreshed "doves," with the instinct of their genus, knowing that the change-house is near, dash on with wonderful alacrity, and soon overtake the convoy, sticking in another hole on the side of an ascent. Regarding it as a matter of slight consequence, our yemschick, not caring to rein in his willing "darlings," passed on, nor stopped until we had gained Bronitza, a small town, twenty-five and a-half versts beyond Ostrofzi; many an anxious glance, meanwhile, having penetrated the growing gloom, in search of the family coach, which at length we espied looming in the distance like a thunder cloud.

Entering Bronitza, we passed through a drove of several hundred cattle, *en route* from the fertile grazing plains in the south to the markets of St. Petersburg. The animals at this point appeared in capital condition; although some were as meagre as Pharaoh's lean kine, yet the majority were well filled out, without being overfed, and seemed to be most powerful animals, and for audacity only to be equalled by the impertinent little Highland black cattle. Several peered close

into our vehicle as it passed slowly through; and when at length it stopped before the change-house door, one had the temerity to insert his whole horned head into our very midst, blowing at the same time in the most alarming manner. For a moment we debated whether in self-defence it might not be as well to "take the bull by the horns," when Alexie came to our relief, and, having turned off the intruder, stood near till the last of them had passed by.

Here we parted with the "goloob-she-ky," and their happy guardian; but the convoy had not made its appearance; and as waiting in that black darkness was by no means amusing, we thought it best to don our hoods, and withdraw under our wraps to rest. Alexie, therefore, closed our shutters, and, instead of bolts and bars, buttoned us in all tight, and then set off to look after the Countess and her party.

Bright and warm fell the early sunbeams through our five-inch squares next morning, routing us from our lair soon after his own rising. But our surprise was considerable to feel ourselves still stationary. Not a sound was to be heard, save the lowing of cattle near, bringing to our recollection the horned horrors of the previous evening. Nothing was to be seen distinctly through our small thick windows; therefore, after much labour, I succeeded in undoing

the leather curtains—which, in anticipation of a domestic being always at hand, were made to button outside—and stepped out upon a scene at once of the most novel and startling kind. There was the same long stone wall on our right which we had indistinctly seen through the darkness of the previous night. There was a square of huts and brick houses, the dim light from which had formed their outline; and there was the same number of windows on our immediate left as we had counted dull lights in the darkness. But on the ground around our *tärentasse* lay at least fifty moujics, in every variety of posture, wrapped in their sheep-skins, and fast asleep. Some lay on their backs, their heads resting on their caps, with their arms and legs outstretched as if they were dead, the hot rays pouring down upon their upturned faces. Others rested on their knees, their foreheads pressed on the ground; while some, more prudent, lay on their faces, with their caps on the back of their heads; and not a few looked like twin brothers entwined in each other's arms; while little groups, in twos, threes, and fours, pillowed their heads upon one another. All was still as the grave; not a creature stirred. Alexie was nowhere to be seen; nor family coach, nor Yemshick; nor horses of any kind; while the upraised shafts of our little carriage presented

the most helpless state of passive bondage imaginable.

Eudoxie became alarmed about her relatives, but sat perfectly quiescent, the picture of doubt and woe. Nor were my own feelings of the most tranquil kind; therefore, picking my way among the sleeping drovers, I searched for the stable-yard, but no convoy was there, and supposing from the out and in architecture of the place, to which additions had evidently been made, that I might not have hit upon the right *locale* for her "High Honour's" carriage, and determining at once to ascertain if those of whom I was in search were about the inn, I entered by a swing-door, which yielded to my touch. Ascending a straight, broad staircase, which arose before me, a half glass door at the top of it barred farther progress; but this also yielded to a push, and I found myself in a long gallery or corridor, w[illegible] numerous doors planted on each side. The sa[me] silence reigned here as without. Not an in[di]vidual was to be seen, and how to commence the search after the missing ones was a considerable difficulty. Whether to open every door, up one side and down the other, or one on one side and then its *vis-à-vis*, took a moment or two to consider. The undertaking was rather a formidable one, the full weight of which I duly felt. But found they must be; and scarcely daring to reflect; I plunged into it at once, as into a disagreeable but imperative necessity.

Cautiously turning the handle of the first door on the right, it opened, affording me at the same moment a glance of the interior; the next, the door was as quickly closed, for the heterogeneous assemblage of military accoutrements and civilian masculine gear of many kinds, as well as the forms of a pair of hard-breathing moustached sleepers, resting upon beds improvised upon four chairs, satisfied me at once that those I sought were certainly not there. Trying the door *vis-à-vis* with equal caution, and peering through an opening about an inch wide, a couple of swords, a pair of patent-leather "Wellingtons," a helmet tossed on its side, &c., &c., satisfied me that this was not the retreat of my friends. I began to think whether it might not be just possible that I had found my way into the barracks instead of the inn. For, after all, who had told us that this was an inn? Therefore, resolving to let the next essay decide my future movements, I opened the second door on the right, and to my dismay the same warlike types and symbols made their appearance; and now seriously uneasy, with almost trembling hand—this was to be the last trial—I turned the lock of the door opposite and breathed freely, for here at last was something more in our way. Perfume of orange-flower burst forth; feminine gear lay scattered on chair and floor, and a smart flounced dress hung on a peg, with a "love

of a bonnet" on the top of it. A carpet-bag, with its contents outpoured like a teeming cornucopia, lay on the floor; while a richly-embroidered *sac de voyage*, and a German money-bag and strap, lay close by. None of these, however, belonged to my party; but being now armed with courage to pursue my search, I applied at the third door on the right, and so on, encountering military everywhere until I reached the very last—fate generally wills it thus—on the right; and here a curious *tableau dormant* met my gaze. In the small apartment, which appeared to be the ante-room to a larger one within, lay stretched on the floor our two German maids, the head of one resting on a heap of straw, that of her colleague on a bundle of clothes. They looked weary and worn, and had evidently thrown themselves down exhausted, and slept as they fell, in their wraps; their boots telling a strange and unusual tale, covered to the very uppers in mud, still wet. In the next apartment lay my friends, strewed about on various improvised beds. They were all asleep, and had the same look of fatigue as the servants, and the same muddy boots. Where they had been, or what they had been about, I could not conceive, but anxious to relieve the mind of my companion, I hastened to the *tarentasse* with a relation of my success.

As everybody still slept, we endeavoured to do

the same, and so far succeeded that, several hours afterwards, Alexie, thinking we had had enough of it, rattled on our leather curtain, or window-door, with a stick—his usual mode of apprising us that he was near—when to our as usual "You may" he unbuttoned the fastenings. To our eager enquiries respecting the fate of the convoy and its passengers, he told us that the family coach, after having been rescued from its mishap on the hill-side, fell into a tremendous hole, about six versts out of Bronitza, just after we had last seen it in the distance. On examination, one of its immense springs was found to be broken, so that there was no alternative for its occupants but to remain where they were all night, or to walk on to the town, which latter course they adopted.

As the unfortunate carriage still lay where it had fallen—a servant having been left to take care of it—workmen were despatched, as soon as they were astir, to ascertain the amount of damage and the time it would take to repair, returning with the comforting intelligence that it would be half a day's job.

In Bronitza itself there seemed to be little promise of anything either to interest or amuse us; but the suburbs appeared inviting, and, therefore, after our party were sufficiently recovered to partake of coffee, we proposed having a droschkii to take a drive. Happily for the inquisitive traveller

in the interior, these conveniences are procurable at every little place having any pretensions to a town. But an unforeseen and serious difficulty presented itself in the fact, that Bronitza was full of troops of the line, temporarily resting *en route* from east to west, and as a Russian lady entertains the greatest dread of the common soldiery, though probably without just cause, the knowledge that all the *mauvais sujets* of the State are incorporated under this title, giving rise, perhaps, to some vague fear; be this as it may, we were prisoners during our stay at Bronitza; and thus bereft of our usual mode of making acquaintance with the locality, we were obliged to content ourselves with the knowledge of so much of it as came within the range of the windows.

One of these, an extra-large one, situated at the end of the corridor and overlooking the square, afforded a delightful outlook, presenting in the perspective a full view of a very handsome church, the tower of which I amused myself by sketching, *en attendant*.

But as if the Fates had determined to torment us, we were obliged to give up this also, for as the day wore on and our military neighbours began to stir, they threw open their doors, and, like peripatetics of a new school, passed from one room to another, making their toilettes *en route*, and singing airs from "La Fille du

Regiment," and other operas *en vogue*, till the whole neighbourhood echoed with the voice of song.

Vis-à-vis to us were three Tcherkessians, whose behaviour on this occasion was in striking contrast to that of their Russian comrades, or even to those of their own compatriots, whom we had been accustomed to meet at the assembly balls in the Northern capital. They most ungallantly annoyed us in every possible way. They set their door wide open, and one of them kept sentry before ours in the most *degagé* undress, peering into our apartments whenever the entrance or departure of a servant afforded the least opportunity. Their language appeared to be the most unintelligible jargon, which they interlarded with Russ, and German, and even French; and through these numerous media they took great pains to let us know that they were in possession of the fact that we were Russians just come from London and Paris. How to pass them on our way to the equipages was a consideration. My friends were evidently uneasy, and declared that they were the wildest lords of the creation they had ever encountered. In short, they looked exceedingly formidable, with their flashing black eyes, and white teeth, and bared throats—for the heat was oppressive. The fifty Russian drovers had cost us scarcely a thought, but these three wild men

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of the mountains caused serious alarm to every member of our party.

Hours would yet elapse ere we should be ready to depart, so we lived in hope that some lucky chance would in the meantime deliver us from their presence. As a precautionary measure, the Countess sent to enquire the name of the commanding officer; and in the event of any great annoyance arising from this novel kind of persecution, we resolved to appeal to a jovial party of Russian officers who were our neigbours on one side, and from whom we were separated only by a thin partition, having in it a door of communication, so that scarcely a word they uttered but reached us distinctly, while we, profiting by this experience, maintained our conversation in an under-tone.

Here, for the first time, I heard a vocal cavalry band, which passed under our windows, followed by half the population of the place, men, women, and children—a picturesque crowd. This kind of military band is very common in the interior, and the effect of so many fine-toned male voices, unassisted by an instrument of any kind, performing airs now lively, now grave, several singing the air, and the united strength of the party, aided by the peasant followers, joining in chorus—and this too in the open air and on horseback—was original.

The gaiety of the peasant women's garb at this place was remarkable, being plaids, the predo-

minant colours of which were orange, red, and blue. Several of the merchants, or rather tradesmen, of Bronitza passed, walking in a row, with their hands below their caftan tails, and all in solemn converse, as if discussing the gravest politics of the world. They were on their way from the exchange; while the chief civic official—one of their class—all bedizened with orders, followed after them in striding haste.

And now down came the rain in torrents, the sun shining brightly through it all; when, with a joyful countenance, Malvina came to tell us that our tormentors—our wild *vis-à-vis*, were just driving off in a double droschkii, in which one of them drove the other two. Heartily relieved, we returned again to our pleasant window in the corridor, of which we remained in undisturbed possession until our departure, for the Russian officers, with that intuitive delicacy which belongs only to thorough gentlemen, closed their doors and kept to themselves during the remainder of our short stay, which terminated an hour after.

At Bronitza we expected horses from Riazan; but these not having made their appearance, we pushed on with such as the change-house afforded. Being no longer on the great highway, these were few in number and miserable in the extreme, added to which, the Yemschick, whom we picked up here, afraid to drive such a ponderous affair as

the family coach, would only accompany us provided he was permitted to post one of the horses, and so turn his back on the danger.

Accordingly, off we started in the very midst of a deluge, the heavy drops rattling on our leather hood, to the preclusion of all conversation; and thus we proceeded to Stephanchina, twenty-six versts from Bronitza. The roads, under the diluting influence of the rain, were far lighter than before, which was the reason of our proceeding in such weather, and which was also a powerful reason for continuing our journey during the night without resting, as in all probability the sun would rise, all glorious as usual, on the morrow; for the rain in these latitudes comes down with a terrific pelt, and is done with it for a time, and an hour or two of his fervid heat would transmogrify our route into one of black putty again. Therefore, we stopped not until we reached Gorodnya, thirty-six versts from the last station, where the travellers halted for breakfast at a peasant's cottage.

Here we found good tea,—*i.e.*, better than the best in England,—thick cream, eggs, black bread, and fresh butter, which the "gude wife" made in a bottle, as she walked up and down before her door, and at which I longed to have a shake, but my friends informed me that "the people" would not think it *comme il faut* if I indulged in an

accomplishment so unusual for a lady. At Krasnoë—whither we were bound—I might do as I liked, but here, not knowing us, they could only judge by appearances, which, in the eyes of these unsophisticated children of nature, would be considerably against us, by doing what was especially deemed their work.

Here we were furnished with a bright brass samoëvar, and china cups and saucers, but our hostess, a mild Sarmatian, or lizard-eyed beauty, had but one tea-spoon to give us, for which she apologised with a dignity and freedom of speech that would have surprised a peasant of Western Europe, with all his so-called freedom. We rather enjoyed the hop-and-go-one effect of our solitary "stirrer."

From Gorodnya to Riazan—seventy-nine versts—we hoped to have made before midnight, but the roads being so terrific between Zaraisk and Illienskaya—two of the intermediate stations—we had to make up our minds for another night in the *tarentasse*, and arrived at Riazan about ten o'clock next morning.

A few minutes after our arrival at the hotel, Mademoiselle de K——, one of the prettiest girls I ever saw, and now one of the brightest stars at the Imperial Court, made her appearance, having been deputed by her parents—who were both temporary invalids at the moment—not to return

without the Countess and her party, and therefore, greatly to the satisfaction of the younger portion of it, the Countess yielded to the request of her friends.

At the time of our arrival, the family of the Governor had taken up its abode for a few weeks at the establishment of the cadet corps, pending repairs to their own residence, having timed the change when the youngsters should depart for their country quarters in canvas towns. And to the handsome *bel étage* of their school we now mounted, and received a thoroughly Muscovite welcome, hearty as that of an old-fashioned Highland one, from the Governor and his wife, who met us at the door, shaking the hands of each of us in both of theirs; further testifying their hospitality by the considerate proposal that we should all lie down for an hour, if not to sleep, at least to rest, after the undulating wear and tear *trajet* of the last two days. Under the circumstances, it was simultaneously agreed that the best way of appreciating the considerate proposition was to accept it forthwith, and we were therefore conducted by our graceful hostess, and her blooming daughter, into a chamber which, barring the height, was quite spacious enough for a public assembly-room, having a row of windows along one side, and a range of extempore sleeping cabinets on the other. These little cabinets con-

sisted of a French bedstead, with "plenishing" of the most dainty description, a small table with looking-glass attached, a wash-stand with a towel rail, a devotional chair, and a small square carpet, the whole enclosed by a couple of high folding screens, which formed the walls of the apartment, and one of the leaves of which served for a door, to open and shut at pleasure. These unique little retreats were sufficiently far apart that one might read in an undertone in one, without disturbing the occupant of the next. Malvina and her assistants—one at least to every bed-room—having drawn down the blinds—which were most luxuriously lined with green—we each disappeared within the precincts of our respective screen, and rested in that stationary, quiet, spacious, clean, and darkened apartment, how gratefully, only those may tell who have been similarly tried.

CHAPTER VII.

Dinner at the Governor's—A "Free and Easy" Visit to the Theatre—Our Baby Beau—Marie Ivanovna—Public Gardens—Borrowed Plumes—Fashionables of Riazan—Visit of the Tartars—Gallant Defence of the Inhabitants—A Nap in the Forest—Rustic Nursery—The Village Apiary—Charnâya-zeum, or the Famous Black Earth of Russia—Arrival at Craspoë-celo.

At half-past four a large party sat down to dinner, which was served in a spacious *salon*, overlooking pleasure-grounds. The Governor's family consisted of several sons, and three very pretty daughters, all from home, except the young lady before alluded to, and a married sister settled in Moscow; but who, being in delicate health, was visiting here for change of air; having with her an infant son, eighteen months old, who sat up at table in his little chair, feeding himself, and otherwise behaving with the propriety of a little

sage. It is very common to meet children of tender years at table. There is no second table for juveniles in a family. As soon as a child can handle a spoon, he sits at the same table with his parents, and partakes of the same dishes as they do, and this custom is observed in most families, whether there are guests present or not. Besides these ladies, there were several military men and civilians, the *aid-de-camp* of the Governor, and others of his suite, so that the assembly, unexpectedly increased by our large party, looked rather a formidable one. But the Governor rubbed his soft white hands with evident satisfaction, as he looked round his hospitable board; reminding me more than once of that king of hosts, my first entertainer at St. Petersburg.

After a sumptuous repast, we repaired to the drawing-room, where coffee, bonbons, and fresh fruits were presented; followed by a proposition that the younger portion of the party should go to the theatre. But how were we to appear at a place of public entertainment in our travelling-dresses? Miss K—— laughed us out of our dilemma.

"It is not Petersburg nor Moscow, remember, but the little country town of Riazan," she added in good English; "and, believe me, the company will be too happy to see so many new faces, to think what their owners have on."

So saying, she caught up her little nephew in her arms, and away we went. A short drive brought us to a small neat building, at the door of which stood a sentinel, who "presented arms" as the Governor's carriage-and-four drew up. A short flight of steps within the house led to the family *loge*, at the entrance of which stood a sentinel; on entering, we found ourselves in a very small, but very clean, neat, and brilliantly lighted house, furnished with open galleries, or boxes, and a *parterre* divided into stalls, with accommodation for the mobility behind. The Governor's box—a capacious private one, lined with mirrors and lighted by a chandelier—was situated directly opposite the stage.

The entertainment consisted of several short pieces; the first one "showing up" the illegal exactions and peculations* of officials; and the lawyer-like quirks of the chenovenick, or clerk. Indeed, these appear favourite themes both in the capitals and the provinces, offering but too large a field for displaying the talent both of play-writers and actors. It is to be hoped that such exposures may lead to reform, though it occurs to one, at a first glance, that offences involving a breach of the gravest principles of social law, are treated too lightly by being thus made the subject

* Could anything be done in this way to shame our "adulterating" peculators at home?

of laughter. This, however, is a disputed point among the Russians themselves, many of whom argue that satire and ridicule act more forcibly on the native character than either preaching or punishment; and they wisely hold that "prevention is better than cure." Probably they are right.

The principal attraction of the evening, however, and one which had enjoyed a successful "run" of a week, was a smart little comedy, entitled "The Man in Love;" whose hundred acts of abstraction keep the company in a continued excitement with laughter. After this, a trio of Tyrolese singers made their appearance, and were considered a novelty.

The small theatre was but thinly attended. A few very nicely-dressed ladies occupied the dress circle; a sprinkling of military the stalls, and about double the number of tradesmen, &c. But these, far from staring at the strangers as we were led to anticipate, greatly to our relief, scarcely deigned to regard us at all.

Our baby-beau appeared to enjoy the spectacle exceedingly, and even to be something of a critic. Indeed, he was already an "old stager" in play-going, reserving all his approbation for the Tyrolese.

On our return home, Miss K——, who is an admirable musician, sat down to the pianoforte

and executed several brilliant compositions of her own; after which, tea being announced, the Barishnæ, as usual, repaired to the "eating-room," where it had been prepared by a "mam'selle," or superior housekeeper; a portly dame of immense size, "fat, fair, and forty," who presided at a table out of which a semicircle had been cut, in order to enable her to approach sufficiently near. Marie Ivanovna had spent the best part of her life with the K—— family, who all regarded her as a devoted friend, while she, in return, believed that there did not exist on the round world such another estimable family as that of her patron.

On the morrow we were early astir, and after coffee, strolled away, all bare-headed* as we were, with no other protection from the sun than our parasols, to visit the town, circulating among the principal streets, and winding up our explorations at the Gastinoë Dvor; visiting a variety of shops, where Miss K—— —who appeared to be a welcome guest at everyone of them—had their different effects turned out, to show the stranger what Russia could do in the way of manufactures.

To be in Riazan, and not visit the public

* Nothing is more common than for ladies to walk about in the most frequented parts of the summer suburban retreats—even of the capitals—without bonnets.

gardens, was to have been in St. Petersburg without seeing Russia. Yet how were we to accomplish this pleasure? How was it possible to appear in this much-frequented resort, in the broad glare of a Russian summer sun, which penetrates every nook, and cranny, and wrinkle, and fold, rendering it impossible for the most trifling imperfection of toilette to pass unobserved, and we in our already much-worn travelling dresses! The project, under these circumstances, was perfectly impracticable; and as to bonnets and visites, we had left them at the hotel, perfectly ignoring their very existence, as some folks do their best friends when they begin to grow shabby-looking. But in the midst of a noisy debate of the whole house, Mademoiselle de K—— left the *salon*, returning a few minutes after, followed by several handmaidens, laden with mantles and bonnets, all fresh and fashionable. The K—— family had just been plunged into mourning; consequently their summer wardrobes, which had recently been replenished from Moscow, were, for the time being, useless, and the happy thought of applying them to our necessities had occurred to the mind of our young friend. Busy fingers were now put in motion, and contending maids—with more regard to brilliancy of colour and conflicting violent contrasts than to the rules of good taste—threw over the shoulders of one a sky-blue mantille, with

a bright amber bonnet as a suitable head-piece; another was clad in blue and green; and a third in cerise and yellow; especial care having been taken to pop the most matronly bonnet upon the youngest head, and *vice versa*, each being too much occupied with her own concerns, for fear of being last, to heed the brilliant "braws" her neighbours were so actively adjusting. When our bustle was over, however, and each surveyed each with inquiring gaze, the outburst of merriment was of the most unqualified kind, and the voice of laughter and exclamation rang through the capacious *salons*, till the Governor, in his distant cabinet, was fain to inquire the cause, bringing all within hearing to the scene of action.

After a general transposition of the various items of our "borrowed plumes," the assembled matrons turned us out a little more in accordance with the exacting rules of that all-important ideality, "comme il faut," and, having all duly passed muster, we debouched upon the sun-lit pavement, a perfect flood of finery.

The gardens were a pretty arrangement of flower-beds, shrubs, lawns, shady walks, and ornamental bridges; but all in very bad order. The grass run to hay, and the ornamental Chinese bridges, falling into decay, presented an air of desolation and neglect, almost surprising to behold in a stirring little capital.

Here we encountered a gang of convicts, chained in pairs, and under the surveillance of keepers; they were variously employed about the grounds, and scowled at us fearfully as we passed. Knowing who Miss K—— was, one of them even threatened her in an undertone, not a little to her alarm. Here we met a number of the dons and donnas of the town. Some of the latter were pretty, and quite as fashionable in appearance as the *belles* of the capitals; while the neat-fitting patent-leather boots and nicely-gloved hands of the former, seemed to be as much a study in these country gardens, as in the more *distingué* promenade of the fashionable resorts of Moscow.

The town of Riazan is one of the most ancient in the empire. In those days when Novgorod, and afterwards Vladimir, were the capitals of Russia, Riazan came in for a share of their prosperity as well as of their misfortunes. It suffered fearfully at the hands of the Tartars. For five days the inhabitants defended themselves with all the valour of despair, but the Tartars rushed into the town in such numbers that the handful of citizens were overpowered. Among the first victims were the Prince, his wife, and mother. Some of the people the savage Tartars crucified, others they boiled, and not a few they kept to fire at for amusement, as at a target. They burnt all their monasteries and churches, with

the exception of the cathedral, into which the women and children had been placed, and around which lay as many wounded Tartars as Russians, which was the probable cause of its escape from the general doom. Riazan contains between 9,000 and 10,000 inhabitants. It is situated on the Troubega, a tributary of the Oka.

Now comes another leave-taking. Already our equipages draw near—now they dash into the paved court-yard, the well-known "tingle ingle" of our *tarentasse* bell arousing the slumbering echoes of the deserted play-ground. Again the valedictory prayer has been breathed by all; salutes have been exchanged and hands warmly grasped, and that hospitable host stands, like a noble column, surrounded by his family and dependants, waving their hands in token of adieu.

Three hundred versts more, and we should be at our journey's end; but the worst of the roads were yet in perspective. A fine *chaussée*, had just been completed on a portion of the road between Riazan and Tambov; but it is the rule in this country, that all these newly macadamized roads must remain, for a certain time after they are finished, exposed to the action of the elements, in order to bind them, and therefore it was still closed; consequently, we had to make our way through sloughs a hundredfold worse than anything we had hitherto encountered.

At ten o'clock—having left Riazan at three—we stopped to rest for four hours, for our horses were now supplied on a different plan to that adopted in the former part of the journey. At Riazan a certain number of peasants had been contracted with to undertake the work which was to be performed by the same horses all the way, the animals working seven hours and resting four.

To enter into the detail of these three hundred versts would be to fill an entire volume, for being the roughest, it was therefore a very eventful portion of the 1200. Suffice it that we passed through the stations of Gredneva, Sous-kaï-ya, Peck-lee-kaï-ya, Rye-ojsk, Ya-keems-kaï-ya, Cherry-moushka, Nova-spaskoë, Kozloff, Demetryfs-kaïya, Chelnavski-dvorikie, Leafs-vegoric, &c., besides a number of smaller places not deemed worthy of mention in the chart of our route.

At one or other of these places we took our rest, and our homely meals; finding everywhere black bread, milk, eggs, cucumbers, kvass. and either tea or coffee; which, in conjunction with the contents of a well-filled box of substantial *comestibles*, provided by the excellent Madame de K——, enabled us to fare even luxuriously. Sometimes our table was spread in an upper chamber, sometimes in the middle of the road; on

which occasions the village children, the pigs, the fowls, and, more than once, a colt or two, proved extremely disagreeable assistants.

On one ever memorable occasion we made our pic-nic in a delightful wood, surrounded by an interminable *parterre* of lily of the valley, the bells and green leaves of which drooped like a fringe round our table-cloth. Here we gathered mushrooms sufficient for half the village, and here also, under the shade of the trees, we had the equipages drawn up, and while the horses baited and rested in the stables of the peasants, we slept, mesmerized into profound repose by the monotonous hum of myriads of bees, the village apiary being just within the precincts of the forest, while, within a stone's throw of us, sat several women sewing, their infant charges meanwhile, like Adamantea's baby deity, dangling in mid-air, their primitive cradles being pieces of coarse linen, the two ends or sides of which were tied together, and thus slipped over the branch of a tree, or on the top of a young sapling, which, bent by the weight of the child out of the perpendicular, partially rebounded with the least touch, and thus imparted an almost constant and agreeable movement to the little innocent that dangled from its drooping branches.

These colonial apiaries were another new experience, and proved sufficiently curious, for

amid a clearance in the forest stood fifty trees, or more; they had been deprived of their branches, and their trunks hollowed out. In these trunks dwell the bees, which find abundance of rich food in the wildflowers that cover an indefinite space around, and among the loveliest of which, the lovely lily of the valley reigns queen supreme.

From this wild honey, which is called *tcharnie me-ott*—black or dark honey—is made mead, the national beverage of Russia, of which they have a variety of kinds, the choicest being that of a delicate pink colour, which is clear and sparkling like the finest champagne. This *tcharnie me-ott* exactly resembles the heather honey of Scotland; it is considerably stronger, but not so delicate, as the garden-bee honey. The peasants make honey-cakes, a compound of flour and honey, which look like gingerbread; and also a kind of bonbon of poppy seed and honey baked together, both of which are excellent.

Not far from this place, which happened to be the scene of one of our most memorable "fixes," we stopped at one of the poorest villages we had encountered *en route*, and were immediately surrounded by a number of children of both sexes, entreating, with a half bashful retiring air and winning voice, that we would give them *boulavkii*, or pins. Unfortunately, our stock of pins was all

but used up; several papers of very fine needles, however, remained in store, and hoping that these would answer instead, we began to distribute them pretty freely among the barefooted crowd, boys and girls alike scrambling for the prize. Rushing off to their parents, who stood about the doors, the delighted children held up the tiny needles for baby brothers or sisters in the mothers' arms to look at; or, sticking them into their blouses, watched with rapturous delight how they sparkled in the sun's rays. Several big lasses, and even youths, taking courage, approached, and without actually asking, it was evident that they also desired to be participators in our munificent (?) bounty. But these latter seemed to admire the wonderful completeness of so small an object, gathering in little groups to handle and admire them. "But look at *his* small eye," cried one. "Feel how he pricks," exclaimed another. "Only look how he shines," added a third. The whole village seemed astir, like an ant-hill disturbed, and man, woman, and child flocked around us.

Oh, for a Lowther Arcade full of glittering baubles to have scattered amongst them! Where so little pleased, what pleasure to have made a whole village happy for life! I must acknowledge that never before had a needle—that first acquaintance of our earliest childhood—appeared so interesting. Like many other elegant and

useful concomitants of refined life, to which custom has inured us from our infancy, we regard them with the same indifference as if they had grown out of the earth, and when the attention has at length been drawn to them, they are analyzed by us for the first time with wonder that men's hands have accomplished such perfection. In this, at least, these simple children of nature had been our teachers, and the last remaining needle of the half-dozen packets we had distributed, served us both with a subject for contemplation for the next half verst.

At length we are on the very threshold of that summer retreat so often spoken of, so often dreamt about, so long anticipated. The face of the country, which, since our departure from Riazan, had presented every phase of landscape, bountifully watered, becomes flat, the soil soft, fine, and as black as coal-dust—they say that a broad belt of this "charnaya zeum," or black earth, runs through the entire empire of Russia.

Now, one well-remembered landmark after another arrests the attention of my almost excited companion; now it is a village on a neighbour's estate, and another, and another; and then a group of windmills and a rivulet; and now we reach a tall post, with a board affixed, which tells the name of the proprietor through whose estate we journey and the number of souls upon it. We have

passed hundreds of these without caring to read; but somehow this has a peculiar attraction, and I begin, as usual, to spell letter by letter. Eudoxie, however, has no patience to wait, and like an indulgent rather than judicious mother teaching her spoiled child to read, she gets before me, and ere the well known word is half spelt through, she exclaims "Krasnoë-Celo!"

"Yes, my friend, this is my father's *terrain*, and our birth-place—how truly the sentiments of our Byron, Jucovsky, come home at this moment:—

> 'The land where we first tasted
> The sweetness of our existence—
> The fields—our own beloved streams—
> The endearing light of our blue skies—
> The well-known mountain torrents,
> The golden play-time of our youth,
> And of our first experience,
> What can e'er replace thy beauty,
> O holy fatherland?
> What heart does not glow
> In praying blessings on thee?'"

But there is no longer time even for sentiment. The reality is upon us. We pass rapidly through a straggling village. Peasant women and children run to their doors. "Our lady is come," passes from mouth to mouth; village dogs scamper, barking at our heels, and urchins, sun-burnt and bare-footed, shout and run. We enter a noble avenue of linden trees, across which the dark shadows fall,

for the sun is already low, and soon we draw up before the porticoed doorway of a princely mansion; domestics crowd around; dogs of various breeds, with wagging tails and open mouths, and with pleasant welcome in their brown eyes, course round about; maids stand in groups at a distance, and the *seigneur* himself now descends the broad steps to welcome his long-absent wife and children. Alexie's Marie is there, and Michael's grey-haired mother, and Irene's nurse, and Eudoxie's nurse, and how many more I know not, or how, on such short notice, they had intimation of our coming. All were bowing, and saluting, and kissing hands, and truly it was an affecting though happy scene. But of that reunion of hearts long separated, and of the varied feelings of each—in one, too deep for utterance, in another, speaking through smiles and tears—let me not say more. Such a moment is one of the grand events of a life-time, too sacred for intrusion or description.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sketch of a Mansion in the Interior—A Village of Horses—Race-horses—Dogs—Fine Organ—English Prints—Agreeable Russian Barbarism—The "Brownies"—Physical Endurance—Fruit Grown in Pits—Ivy under Glass.

THE mansion of Krasnoë-Celo is 1,200 versts south-east of St. Petersburg, and 316 east of Moscow. It is situated a short distance from the great highway, which for several versts forms a fine avenue, being planted with linden trees.* From this high-road a private drive diverges, entered by iron gates, which are guarded on each side by a Gothic lodge, built of brick and ornamented with quaint devices carved out of a soft white stone. A few paces within these gates, and

* These trees have been the greatest charge from their infancy (?) up to the present moment; and even now have to be watched at night, lest the serfs cut them for firewood, &c.

we have reached the centre of a spacious quadrangle; here we turn to the right and follow the course of the drive, through lawns, flower-beds, shrubs, and tall columns of creeping plants, trained to a considerable height, among which our own familiar wild hop towers high above the rest. This brings us to the front or carriage-entrance, in the main or original body of the building, a part of the house inhabited exclusively by the family, and differing little in external appearance from the back-front or pleasure-ground side, but in the quadrangle front, a line of conservatories runs along the windows of the ladies' apartments, which latter are situated, all together, on one side of the house, while those for gentlemen are on the opposite. Each end of this main portion of the building is terminated by a square tower, about fifty feet high; from these float flags; that over the ladies' end showing that the mistress of the mansion is at home; that on the other marking the presence of its *seigneur*. Stretching from behind these towers, and consequently *vis-à-vis* to each other, runs a line of Gothic buildings, connected by these towers with the main building, and thus forming three sides of the quadrangle. These erections are new, and of brick, the style something of the Saracenic kind, the prominent buttresses, pinnacles, ramified windows, the profusion of ornaments, the small clustering pillars

and pointed arches of which are, for the most part, composed of the white stone before mentioned. One of these lines of buildings comprises the kitchen and its appurtenances, the cook's rooms, the "contara," or steward's office, the *seigneur's* clerk's room, the apartments of a superannuated nurse, with others for the accommodation of strangers not admitted to the family table. On the opposite side are the apartments occupied by Alexie and his wife; the laundry, dye-house, carpet-factory, lace-worker's room, store-house, ice-cellars, &c. Contiguous to these are two very solemn-looking erections, designed as the mausolea of the family; they are distant about thirty feet, but still the line of the quadrangle is carried along by an open wall of brick, or, more properly speaking, a railing, which is formed by placing the bricks on end, and covering these with others laid on flatly, and thus leaving square apertures between each; this perforated wall, while it is thoroughly substantial, has a very pretty light effect. Adjoining one of these mausolea — at the back of which the foundation of a church is being dug—is a perfect *bijou* of art, viz., a fine Gothic arch leading out from the quadrangle to what, hereafter, will be the entrance to the new church; this arch reminds one of the frame of a large orient window, minus the smaller mullions, that has been taken from some old abbey ruin to

serve as a model. It is surmounted by a beautiful Greek cross, sculptured, like lace or filigree, out of the said white stone.

At a right angle with this, and *vis-à-vis* to the main building, are the stables, the architecture of which, though not so elaborate, harmonizes well with the rest; these are very extensive, and contain a riding-school, the arena of which is as large as Astley's in London, and ample accommodation for several hundred horses; when these stables shall be quite finished according to the *seigneur's* own ground plan, they will resemble a little village, consisting of numerous streets and squares. Here are several magnificent race-horses, one of which is a notoriety in both capitals, having carried off the first prizes; there are also six superb thorough-bred bays, with black legs and tails, for harness, matching almost to a hair, and many other notabilities of the race and driving gems. Dogs there are also, innumerable, the favourites being a Polish hound and a brace of English water-spaniels, bearing the classic name of Ichii.

But let us return house-wards and enter this country palace. Just inside the base of the flag-tower, on the gentlemen's side, we have a long perspective, extending through the entire suite of reception-rooms, several of which being without doors, the limits of each are marked by white

columns, across which curtains may be drawn at pleasure.

First, then, there is the dining-room, capable of accommodating fifty at dinner, according to our English notions of space, but Russian ideas on this point are extravagant. A dinner-table ungraced by margins round which a "troika" might be driven with ease, would hardly be tolerated in the country; therefore, when the number exceeds the usual complement of the *seigneur's* family, dinner is served in the adjoining and larger room —the hall, or the music and dancing-room. In this *salon* is a barrel-organ, eight or nine feet high, having a great variety of barrels, which are easily shifted out and in; they are set with every air one can think of, old and new, Russian, German, Italian, and French, opera, *contredanse*, polka, and valse, for whenever anything pretty in the shape of music becomes the vogue, or takes the fancy of the *seigneur*, the organ builder at Moscow receives an order to transmit it forthwith in the substantial form of a new barrel. It is a beautiful thing, sounds all over the mansion, and is a never-ending source of amusement.

Next to this is the "English" room, a small *boudoir*, with an English fire-place and some other English contrivances, from which it derives its name. This leads into the guest-chamber, or great chamber, a veritable state drawing-room,

and is divided by rows of columns into one large and four smaller *salons*, the centre having a gallery round the ceiling for musicians. From the ceiling of each depends a costly chandelier, proportioned to the size of each. One of these smaller divisions is used as a ladies' morning retreat, and running out of it—being at the back of the English room—is the *seigneur's* cabinet, the walls of which are hung with paintings; some are the works of the different members of the family; and others by old masters. There are also a few fine coloured engravings; one, a representation of Epsom race-course sixty years ago, and three or four portraits of race-horses of distinction, bred by the late Duke of Portland and Lord George Bentinck. The guest-chamber, as well as all the others, is most tastefully decorated, and comfortably and elegantly furnished. One of Erard's harps, and two superlative German-made pianofortes, complete the arrangements of a *salon* which, for luxury and refinement, could scarcely fail to meet the approbation of the most fastidious.

We have strolled to the end of the reception rooms, and here, in a cosy, quiet nook, is a small but choice library, containing selections from the best authors in various languages. In this same little corner is a little door, one of several private entrances to the apartments of the ladies. Here the Countess has her *boudoir*, her bed-room, her

own conservatory, her maid's room, her private entrance door, and her cabinet for devotion—a small apartment without windows and about ten feet square. This cabinet contains a little altar, thickly studded with missals, some of which are magnificently illuminated. The Life of Christ, by Thomas à Kempis, bound with gold, and richly set with diamonds, pearls, and rubies, occupies a prominent place. Here are also pictures of the Saviour and the Saints, some unframed, but others, with the exception of the flesh parts, completely inlaid with jewels. One, a beautiful painting of the Madonna, the drapery of which is one mass of pearls and emeralds, while from above depends a star-shaped lamp, which is fed with consecrated oil, and burns day and night, shedding a clear soft light over the glittering riches outspread beneath, dazzling, yet soft, in their refulgence. This little sanctuary may be termed the "risnitza" of the family, wherein are deposited relics, the collections of a succession of generations—gatherings from many shrines.

Here, then, we were surrounded by every necessary, and by as many of the luxuries of refined life as one would expect to meet with in a substantial country residence an hour by rail out of any French or German city.

"Truly, if this is a specimen of the barbarism of the interior, which Western Europeans discuss,

and for which Peterburghers warn the uninitiated to be prepared, it is a barbarism of a very agreeable kind," I said to myself, at the same time approaching one of the open French windows of my bed-room, and looking forth upon a lawn and flower-beds, and a pretty piece of water, beyond which stretched apple, and cherry, and pear orchards, now in their fullest blossom, upon which the last rays of the sun still lingered, as if loth to depart, painting the still waters with fantastic shadows, streaked with crimson, and purple, and gold.

Cows lowed in the distance, and musical-sounding bells, like the passing traveller's wolf bell, tingled afar off; and, later, the hoarse bay of many, and apparently large, watch-dogs responded to each other in all directions. Looking at the clouds, and at the earth, and around my chamber, I listened, and wondered if in reality several thousand miles separated me from that home country to which every attribute by which I was surrounded seemed so much alike, when, as if in mockery at the comparison, a long, shrill, melancholy sound rises upon the stillness, and slow footsteps pass under my window, and, looking down, I behold, through the gathering gloom, a brown figure, somewhat resembling a hooded friar, playing upon a triangle and proceeding with slow and measured step towards the flag-

tower on the left; he there halted, and again that long, shrill, melancholy "Slou—shi—e—t—e—e?" or, Do you hear? the last cadence of which seemed interminable, resounded on all sides like the cry of some huge bird of prey. Presently "Slou—shy—e—e," or, "I hear," responded in the same mournful expresssion, and from an opposite direction; and now another friar, playing upon his triangle, passes under the window, and repeats his melancholy cry at the same spot where his *confrère* had preceded him three minutes before; and once more is answered by the distant response. Straining my powers of wonderment to their utmost tension, in order to obtain some probable elucidation of this mystery, I patiently listen for the next wild cry, when a merry "he, he, he! ha, ha, ha!" at my very ear, causes me to start to my feet, which only evokes a heartier repetition of the same cheering sounds. It is Eudoxie, like a ghost in her night-gear! She had already retired to rest when the sounds just described fell upon her ear, and though to her a pleasant association of her childhood, she considerately reflected that they might alarm the stranger. These musical "brownies" were the watchmen, who every night at sunset go on duty, remaining at their post until sunrise. Two guard the house, and a number of others the grounds, which are divided into districts, several of which are watched by trained dogs. The use

of the triangle answers a double purpose, for besides keeping them awake, it acts as a check upon their movements by informing any watchful member of the household that they are at their duty, and the outcry which they raise on reaching the opposite angles of the quadrangle is a check upon each other. The house on every estate is thus guarded through the dark hours of midnight, although the manner of keeping the watchmen up to their duty varies.

Those accustomed to our English emollients after a long journey—to prolongation of rest carried far into the next day, followed by all sorts of care and dainty treatment, and perfect freedom of action, or rather inaction, throughout the next twenty-four hours, with emancipation from all rule and regularity, and discipline of the house, &c., could scarcely be prepared for the indifference testified on such occasions by the Russians. With them, apparently, a difficulty, once passed, is for ever forgotten. Indeed, by the higher classes it is deemed puerile to complain of fatigue, or, in short, of any creature suffering, and this being early impressed on their children, inures them to be content with things as they come, and to "rough it" uncomplainingly to a most wonderful degree. Having already enjoyed some insight into that peculiar "naturel" of theirs, I was scarcely surprised at sunrise next morning to hear

the voices of my younger friends calling to me from under my window, and thinking no more of that terrific journey they had just completed than if it had been a morning drive, while I, with aching head and aching bones, thought only of a week's rest at the very least.

"We are going to the garden, will you come? Don't stay to dress, pop on a dressing-gown, or anything," said Irene, "for we shall meet no living creatures but the watchmen and the dogs, and they will think that the newest mode."

"No, friend, don't stay even for that," shouted her facetious sister; "just wrap your sheets round you; I promise that nothing shall look at you but the frogs and the birds; for I think it possible *they* may stare, unaccustomed as this generation of them must be to the sight of so many strangers about the place."

The silence around echoed the merry accents of Eudoxie's cheerful voice; and, all weary as I was, to be outdone in a walking match, although at four o'clock in the morning, and after a journey of 1,200 versts, was not to be borne; so, joining my friends, we set off, now through a plantation of young trees, now by the open banks of the ornamental water. Next, crossing a fairy-looking bridge of white stone, we found ourselves in a country road, hedged on both sides by lilac trees and Siberian honeysuckle, through which bower-like openings led into

fields of cucumbers, carrots, turnips, cabbage, kail,* &c., extensive preserves of poppy, and sunflower, and other plants, from which the Russians extract oil of the purest kind; here, also, were fields of tobacco. These various fields and plantations are divided by hedges of currant, gooseberry, and raspberry-bushes; to these succeed a mosaic of rhubarb, herbs of various kinds, and acres of peas, beans, &c., all hedged with fruit-bushes, as elsewhere. In short, an immense tract, several times as large as a good-sized nursery ground in the suburbs of London, lay around us, apparently most precisely neat and prosperous-looking, the green crops being in various stages of high promise.

"But where is the garden?" I inquired, looking around me for some kind of walled domain, and seeing nothing of the sort but the seed-house close by, and the old church a mile off.

"But are we not in it already?" responded Irene.

"Is there not sufficient to please you here?" inquired her black-eyed sister.

* Subsequently some seed of this kail was sent to a friend in Aberdeenshire, the owner of a model farm in that county, who produced from it several heads of the colossal height of seven feet, one of which was exhibited as a wonder of the kail tribe in the shop of a seedsman in Union Street, Aberdeen. The refuse leaves were found excellent for cattle. In Russia its usual height is from two to four feet and a-half.

"Yes, truly, of its kind, enough and to spare; but where are the flowers and the hot-houses? returned the stranger.

"All in good time," said Eudoxie, leading the way to a fine avenue of old elms, a verst in length at the least, broad as a modern street, and provided with rustic benches at every few dozen yards, forming one of the most cool and delightful summer retreats imaginable; through this we walked, and having now made the circuit of the house and its immediate pleasure-grounds, we cross the quadrangle, and at the back of the Gothic arch arrived at a succession of pits, ten or twelve feet deep, about eighteen long, and five broad, neatly walled inside with brick, and provided with a circular flight of stone steps. In these pits grew cherry, peach, apricot, and other standard trees of the same kind; during the day these pits are covered with netting to protect the fruit from the birds, and, at night, glasses are drawn across; pending the severe winter, they are boarded entirely up, and covered with straw. This method produces fruit of large size and most delicious flavour. Near this is a large tract devoted to strawberry, melon, and water-melon beds, the young fruit in the latter—now about the size of large turnips—being propped upon bricks, to keep them out of reach of slugs and grubs, and to expedite the process of ripening.

Here also was a row of hothouses, which contained vines of various choice kinds; and an extensive greenhouse, contiguous to the house, and connected with the ladies' conservatory, presented a superb show of exotics, among which the pink and white rose, like blossoms of the oleanders, with every shade and colour of geranium, predominated. Here the rustic ivy had found a palace home, and, like a lowly maiden wedded to a princely mate, grew in beauty side by side with the lofty passion-flower, climbing in graceful embrace round pillar and door-frame, or depending in luxuriant festoons from the ceiling.

These grounds are most carefully watched during the fruit and flower season, for the peasants are enthusiastic admirers of both, and, notwithstanding the utmost vigilance, they make frequent razzias in the preserves, particularly after the dahlias. Aggay, the flower-gardener, is almost beside himself sometimes; flowers which he had taken the greatest trouble to bring out to perfection being carried off ere they are full blown.

CHAPTER IX.

Carpet and Lace Workers—Miss Hope de P———Apartment of a Serf—Visit to the Kitchen—A Genius—The Spanish Flies—A Sunday Morning at Krasnoë—Kissing the Cross—Pastor's Address—The Porch of the Seigneur—Behaviour of the People.

Our first exploring expedition, after coffee, was to the carpet maker's. *En route* thither, we encountered the peasant Graces of Krasnoë—the plump, soft-eyed daughters of the flower-gardener, who were singing like larks at the very "top" of their voices. They pretended to weed, though either of our party could have done as much work in five minutes as the three did in ten. But they call it "play" to be employed about the great house, which is a favourite pastime. They dearly like to wander among the flowers, and look into them, and admire their beauty, forms, and colours; and to peep into the windows

of the house, lounging on the window-sills, and talking, in no whispering undertone, of the pictures or furniture within. The women take it in turn to weed and water in the neighbourhood of the house, and anticipate this pleasure long beforehand. The three were very picturesquely clad in new suits of every-day working clothes, the produce of their own hands, from the sewing of the seed to the perfect finished dress!—coarse, it is true, but strong, and well-adapted to their wants, and tastefully ornamented, too, with rows of open work woven in blue and red round the hems, sleeves, and throat. What would the poorer class of women in England think of this? Not a few might come and take a leaf or two out of the Russian serf's book, not only with advantage to themselves and their class, but for the benefit of their country at large! These women not only make—that is, manufacture—their own and families' wardrobes, transact all the business of their small households, fetching water not unfrequently from a distance of six miles, but take a turn in field labour; that is, where they are not one of a commonwealth, in which case their time is given to the particular work, whether it be lace-making, embroidery, slippers, or pottles, which engages the commune.

But to return to our "Graces," who are all this while stealthily regarding us like children at

mischief in school when they want to laugh at something amusing, but fear to be heard; and only by the most stringent exertions were they able to suppress the outbursting laugh, which, when we had fairly passed them, made its escape in a distinctly audible snicker, followed by an undisguised peal. It afterwards appeared that the source of their merriment was the small waists of the young ladies! For the first time in their simple lives, they had looked upon monstrosities of this kind, their own being round, and ample, and ungirt even by a string.

At the entrance to the carpet-worker's room, we encountered a number of little girls sitting round a heap of bright yellow flowers, with which they had just returned from the fields and roadsides. From these, a beautiful yellow die is extracted. In form they resemble the common daisy, but are much larger. Around them were large tubs full of dye, while, on rails starting from the wall, wools of different colours were hung to dry. These girls were very much like northern Scotch girls of the same class and age, the high cheek-bones and deep blue eyes of some, and the bare feet of all, conveying both an individual and national likeness, though their manners presented a very striking difference, and one, I reluctantly admit, by no means in favour of my compatriots. There was an ease and modest self-possession

about these unsophisticated children quite surprising; without a shade of flippancy, they were without any of that sheepish bashfulness remarkable in our country bumpkins, or that still more painful cringing and deprecatory pose of humility which, *chez nous*, the plebeian too often assumes in presence of the patrician. These little things stood up and spoke to their master's noble-looking wife and handsome daughters—of whom they must have often heard, but whom they had never seen until that moment—with the same dignity of bearing and unabashed look with which their fathers and mothers would have addressed them.

Passing into the next apartment, at a loom of considerable magnitude, sat four girls, about fifteen years of age, wearing their hair plaited in two long tails, like those of Swiss girls, tied at the ends with red bows. One of them, the most dressy looking of the quartet, sported a ball of swan's down, as large as a good sized powder-puff, from each ear, suspended by a thread; with every movement of her person, as her busy fingers pursued their work, these balls dangled and bobbed about in the most ludicrous manner, giving her a rap first on one eye, then on the other. This was the most novel piece of rustic pretension we had yet seen—a first dawning of those ambitious hankerings after the "vanities of vanities" supposed to belong exclusively to their

sex. Unlike their sisters of refined life, these juveniles are deemed still too young to wear jewels, so content themselves, in the meantime, with worsted rings or cherries, or swan's down balls in their ears; until a couple of years later, when, as brides, they make up for the delay, by wearing at once on their persons all that they possess.

These girls had nearly completed a very handsome carpet, four yards square, and composed of two colours, viz., scarlet and grey, but of every shade of these two colours, the design scrolls, leaves, and tendrils, with a border to match. The pattern for the workers is painted on paper, arranged exactly as for worsted-work, and the carpet is wrought on the wrong side. The Count had intended this carpet as a surprise for his wife; the introduction of this kind of work at Krasnoë-Celo being something quite new, and for a bachelor's domicile, rather original. But the fact is, that about thirty versts off lives a maiden lady, a very old friend of the family. This Hope, the daughter of Michael, is one of those ever-working, progressive, and at the same time, unobtrusive characters, who influence everything with which they come in contact. With a heart large enough to give the world away, if it was her's to give, her patrimony is scarce 100 serfs! These, however, adore their mistress,

for she studies their well-being. The young men can read and write, the maidens make exquisite lace, and the old women linen and fine thread, and a variety of other things, by the sale of which they realise considerable sums. Friends in the capital send this excellent lady the newest patterns of French and English laces, which she imitates with wonderful accuracy, and sets her maidens to make. So Mademoiselle Hope, having instructed all her own people, extends her enterprise to her neighbours, and at the present time, every establishment within her reach can boast of thriving lace and carpet manufactories, superintended by herself. In all cases they spin their own thread, and spin and die their wools for the carpets, except in very difficult or delicate colours, when they send for them to Moscow. Some of the Russian lace is of the finest description, and of rich and intricate design. I have seen some, made by the peasants of Count Orloff, that was almost of cobweb texture, and of pattern so light and graceful that it resembled blond; it was valued at 45*s.* per yard. But watching lace-making is like gazing at the movements of a compositor; it is the result, more than the process, that surprises most, and can be best understood; therefore, leaving these hives of industry, I accompanied Irene to the apartments of her nurse. This was a visit

her foster-child had been desirous of paying before breakfast; but the good old dame was at church. She was drinking her coffee out of the saucer, with her elbows on the table, as we entered, sipping the Mocha through a lump of sugar in the side of her mouth, after the old Dutch style. The neatness, cleanliness, and comfort of her apartment surprised me not a little, for though I had seen a good deal of the feather-bed and chest-of-drawer comforts of the house-servants of the capital, I imagined those to be rather acquired than indigenous; but here, at least, all was natural. Before an open window stood a small table of cherry wood, supporting a large volume, which I found afterwards to be the Bible in its original Sclavonic,* and which she could read fluently, although unable even to spell in Russ. This, though it appeared to me extraordinary, is by no means uncommon. The Holy Scriptures were therefore her sole study, not only from choice, but necessity; and, good, honest, simple creature, she did her best to live in accordance with their laws. Near this table stood her bed, a French one, also of cherry wood, minus curtains, and covered with a patchwork quilt, surmounted

* What a mercy it would be to our novel-reading, profane, song-learning millions, and to our own household servants, with their letter-prying-into and scribbling propensities, if we had some double-tongued arrangement of this kind, whereby they might get at the kernel and leave the husks.

at the head by a pile of five pillows, graduated in size, till the top one was scarcely larger than a good stout pin-cushion, each covered with fine linen slips and frilled all round. A chest-of-drawers, and chairs to match, with a little round table set on a square carpet in the middle of the room, completed her complement of furniture; while in a corner was arranged her little altar, with its suspended and ever-burning lamp, the picture of her saint in its nook above, and on the walls, several German tobacco-boxes, and more conspicuous than anything else, a full-size portrait — by no means badly executed — of her deceased husband, a handsome man, with a Polish cast of feature—he had been a valet. Round it, hung several wreaths of *immortelles*, her offerings on the several anniversaries of his death. On perceiving who her visitors were, she set down her saucer, uttered an exclamation of delight, made one step in advance, and was locked in the arms of her almost idolised foster-child, who nearly raised the little woman off her feet in the exuberance of her joy. Leaving them to the undisturbed enjoyment of their happiness, Aleen and I took the route to the kitchen, having, as we entered the apartment of Anna Petrovna, caught sight of the professional white jacket and high calico cap of Alexie the cook, in the distant perspective of a long passage. At home in his own kitchen, the able servant was

"himself again," supreme and potent, and looked the very king of cooks, as he stood half hidden behind a twirling column of steam, which escaped from one of a legion of bright copper stew-pans that covered the mighty stove, which, like the tomb-stone of a Colossus, occupied the centre of his *cuisine*. Arheap, Archibald, the Count's man, had been cook during Alexie's absence, but had now resigned the post of honour to his chief.

"And what will Arheap do in the meantime?" I innocently inquired, supposing that because he was a cook he could do nothing else.

"Oh!" replied Alexie, "but Arheap is very clever, he can do everything; he bakes the best bread; he bleeds, shaves, valets, and cuts the hair of Nichola Petrovitch, the Count; he is his tailor, his apothecary, his purse-bearer, and if it was required, he could make the Count's boots—for he makes his own."

Desirous of having a look at such a prodigy, I was about to ask where he might be found, when he appeared at the door. He bowed to the stranger, and walking up to the child, raised her hand to his lips, she most demurely returning the salute *à la mode* on the temple. Arheap wore a loose blue and white jacket, with trousers to match, and a long white apron. Approaching a shelf upon which were ranged glass jars for preserves and pickles—varying in size from two feet to as many

inches—he picked out one of the largest, saying as he did so, "The Spansky mooshka have come," and "the Spansky mooshka have come" flew from mouth to mouth, for this is one of the annual events of the year, and the usual precursor of the busiest portion of it. So, accompanying Arheap to a hedge of lilacs near the house, we found one end of it literally covered with myriads of beautiful insects, in shape and size resembling the English cricket, but the bodies and wings of brilliant green, shot with gold. These beetles had settled like a swarm of locusts on the tops of the trees, and were eating their way downwards, their path of destruction being marked by the skeleton remains of the leafless branches. The sound of their movement resembled the working of minute machinery.

To catch them was easy enough, poor things! for, seizing branch after branch, which drooped again with the weight of them, Arheap shook them off into his glass jar, and in a few minutes it was full; they made no attempt to fly away, so fatigued and voracious they appeared. From Arheap I learned, that for several days detachments of the swarm would alight on this particular hedge, for, although there were lilac-trees innumerable scattered over the grounds, year after year this one was the favourite *rendezvous*, which they never quitted until every leaf had

disappeared, the veins and stalks only remaining. This jar full was Arheap's annual *quantum sufficit*, which he exposed for the remainder of the day in the hot sunshine. By the evening the flies were all dead, when the jar was put into a slow oven for the night; this makes them crisp and easily reducible to a fine powder, which he then mixes with certain quantities of yellow resin, wax, Burgundy pitch, and turpentine, and spreads upon pieces of sheep-skin, which he cuts into plasters of all sizes, and stores away for use. These Spanish flies—*Cantharis vesicatoria*—are the same as those found in Spain, Italy, France, and the Islands of the Mediterranean; but from Astracan, in Asiatic Russia, the largest quantities are exported. They feed on ash, privet, elder, &c., but the lilac—soon after the flower is off—is their favourite food. Arheap insists upon it that they are migratory insects, coming hither from a distance, and that they merely rest at Krasnoë *en route*. The usual method of taking them in large quantities is to smoke the trees, when they fall down on a cloth spread beneath.

Sunday at Krasnoë-Celo is a *jour de fête*, and the family receiving-day; at ten o'clock in the morning the household attends the service at church, the family party winding its way through umbrageous *allée* and footpath, and the house servants in straggling groups behind; the mu-

sical but strange-sounding bells, and the foreign garb of the peasants in the distance, also wending their way to church, alone reminding me of the strange land in which, for the present, I am a sojourner.

The church of Krasnoë-Celo is small, and of wood, and by no means adequate to the necessities of the increasing population; but as a handsome one of stone is in course of erection, those who cannot find accommodation, in the meantime, at their own parish church, attend that of the nearest neighbour, about five versts distant.

This was the most primitive Greco-Russian place of worship I had yet seen, but the devotion and propriety of the worshippers were most gratifying to behold. As usual, the altar was adorned with pictures and pendent lamps, and wax tapers of all sizes; but the screen was less ornamented, and the robes of the clergy less magnificent than those to which I had been accustomed. Indeed, the garb of the officiating deacon was of coarse green baize, confined round the waist by a cord of hemp, while his long lanky locks, dishevelled and unplaited, overspread his shoulders and produced the wildest effect. Aleen seemed petrified on beholding him, and a smile passed over the countenances of all of us on regarding the astonished expression of her's. But the dereliction of our thoughts from the path

of duty was but momentary, being recalled by the full deep tones and earnest expression of the papa, or chief priest, or vicar, a man of profound piety, and—for his humble position—learning also. His address or sermon after the prayers was brief, but impressive; perfectly free from elocutional pretence of any kind, but delivered in language pure and simple as that of the primitive teachers, and with tone and gesture gentle and persuasive. The address was a simple exposition of the beauties of Christ's character.

Here a new feature in the services arrested my attention. Immediately after the prayers for the Imperial family—which are long by reason of the number of its members, each with their father's name thus, Nicolai Pavlovitch, Nicholas, the son of Paul, being repeated, and including children and grandchildren—the Count and Countess, and all their children, were enumerated in the same manner.

As elsewhere, a small square stage, railed off and placed near the wall, was provided for the ladies, although at this *seigneurie* church we were its only occupants; on the opposite side to us was a gallery, large as a little room, and extending outwards considerably beyond the wall of the edifice, having the appearance of an open porch or shed, the roof supported on pillars, and attached to the outside of the church, yet com-

municating by means of sliding panels with the church itself. In this stood the *seigneur* during the service, thus enjoying the fresh air without and the service at the same time.

On the conclusion of mass, the Count entered the church, and approaching the papa, who stood in the middle of it, reverently stooped, and kissed the large iron cross* which the pastor held in his hand. The ladies followed his example; after them the servants at Court, according to their rank; after these the village magnates; and finally, the simple folks, and all with the utmost regard to precedence, good order, and perfect propriety of look and demeanour. Although the new guests could not fail to be objects of considerable curiosity to these unsophisticated serfs, yet, neither by vulgar stare nor other intimation could we perceive the state of their feelings on the subject; but when all had left the

* It had been delicately suggested to me, that if not in violation of any dogma of my own, it might be as well to go through this hebdomadal observance of kissing the cross, in order to escape the remarks of the serfs, who would be sure to observe the omission, and might deem me a heathen, and consequently receive cause of offence by my presence in their Christian gathering. As it was, an old dame challenged me one day that I met her in the high-road. After the usual salutation of "Bogh sto-boë," or God be with thee, she asked if her God was my God. On assuring her that there was but one God for all the world, she replied, mildly, "Then why do you not bow and cross yourself in church as we do?"

house of God, the more curious, who lingered about outside until the party had passed on, followed at a distance, making their remarks on the colours and make of the dresses, &c.

The clergy of Russia are divided into two classes, viz., the regular and the secular, the regular comprises the monks and great dignitaries, who are bound to celibacy; and the secular, the officiating or parochial priesthood. Both of these are equally subject to the Holy Synod. Before Peter, the power now vested in the Synod was held by the patriarch of the Greco-Russian Church, but several of these dignitaries having tampered with the safety of the State, the patriarchal office was shorn of its pontifical-like power, and thereafter vested in a Synod, and from this body appeals are referable to the Emperor, as temporal head of the church.

The monkish clergy pass through three degrees, viz., those of Probationer, Proficient, and Perfect; they are divided into Deacons, Priests, Priors of Convents, Abbots of Monasteries, and Archbishops. Monasteries are of three classes, or degrees of rank; the first of these is styled the Lavra,* in which the rich usually take the veil—for monks as well as nuns wear veils — and

* From the Greek word signifying a street, or quarter. Only the largest monasteries are so called.

where each member of the brotherhood provides for himself. Of this class there are but few. The Troitzka, near Moscow, is one; Alexander Nevski, at St. Petersburg, is another, but the oldest is at Kiev, having been founded in the eleventh century.

In the Zienobia, or second rank, the members live in common; and in the Staropegia, or third, peasants may take the vows, there being a provision made for such by the Synod.

Monks are not permitted to take the vows until they are thirty, and nuns are not received until they are fifty, but having once entered upon a religious life, the discipline is very severe. They are bound to celibacy, to study only what concerns their religion, and forbidden the use of animal food.

As a body, the monks of the Greco-Russian Church are most assiduous in their self-imposed duties; they care not to meddle in the concerns of active life, to the influences of which they are as much dead as if they were shut up in the bowels of the earth. They are generally mild and gentle in their demeanour; and, although moving in a sphere so limited, and often extremely ignorant, yet they are by no means bigoted, but tolerant to a most generous degree, fully believing and hoping that all denominations of Christians will be saved as well as those of their own creed,

a truly God-like spirit, which many of the bickering and litigious sectarians of the civilized West might follow with profit to themselves, and to the world at large.

On occasions of solemn ceremony, the robes of the monastic clergy are of the richest description of velvet, damask, or cloth of gold, and blazing with jewels; but on ordinary days they wear only a cassock, or robe of coarse black stuff; the head-dress, which resembles a hat without a brim, and is somewhat taller and narrower towards the crown, is provided with a veil of black crape, which falls over the crown and envelopes the shoulders.

The higher dignitaries, such as abbots and bishops, wear a white head-dress, and veil of white crape, which has a very singular, but by no means ungraceful, effect.

The income of an archbishop is about £700 a-year.

CHAPTER X.

Sunday Visitors—Mr. William Cabbage—The Seigneur and his Wife Imprisoned by their Serfs—Humane Law for the Benefit of Cattle on a Journey—Russian Old Maids—Dinner Arrangements—Life in the Interior—Modern Society—Occasional Dinner Guests—Soldiers in the Village—The Melancholy Man—A Russian Horse Jockey—The Horse Dealer's "Queer Customer"—An Eccentric Pair.

Soon after our return from church, the jingle of a wolf-bell, and the sound of rapidly-advancing hoofs and wheels, announced a fast-coming visitor; my younger friends amused themselves by speculating as to who among the category of their rustic neighbours the first arrival perchance might be, when Vasili Vasilovitch, familia Capoustoff, *Anglice*, Mr. William Cabbage, the son of William, was announced, and while a smile illuminated the faces of the refined Petersburghers, at the announcement of a name so pro-

vincial, Mr. William Cabbage glided—rather than walked—on the thinnest-soled of glittering dress-boots, into the Gastinoë, and having been duly introduced to *les nouvelles arrivées*, made to each a most profound bow; specimen No. 1 of that genus of our race, at whose *gaucheries* my friends had promised themselves bountiful amusement. But Mr. William Cabbage was by no means *gauche*; he was well-bred, well-made, well-dressed, well-to-do, and rather good-looking; a bachelor, of twenty-eight or so, fair and sleek, and as affected as the most senseless woman.

Another bell, and other advancing hoofs and wheels, are heard winding through the drive, and another, and another; for both flags float jauntily from the towers of the mansion-house of Krasnoë-Celo; and all the surrounding world, for many miles, having been long in anticipation of this reception-day, hasten to the goal, some on the wings of affection, for "Auld Lang Syne," others out of curiosity, and more than one for a good dinner, for in this last-mentioned respect I find there are John Bulls everywhere; in short, the arrivals became incessant, and the announcements so numerous that, an hour at the very least before dinner—on Sundays it is served at three o'clock—a courteous and fashionably-attired company filled the spacious *salons*; matrons from twenty to fifty, rational-looking and reasonably

attired, sat chatting in groups; while their husbands formed a little crowd round the Count, talking of local affairs, the chief topic of interest at the moment being the recent arrest, by their own serfs, of a *seigneur* and his wife, living in the neighbourhood—*i.e.* ten miles off. This event appeared to have caused considerable excitement in the government; but the majority who discussed the question were sympathisers with the peasants, and testified little commiseration for the proprietor and his wife, whose capriciousness was notorious, and to which cause, rather than to actual cruelty, they attributed the anger of their serfs.* The serfs demanded a court of inquiry on their conduct, and, pending the arrangements consequent on such a proceeding—for the Governor of the province, with all the neighbouring great lords, had to be subpœnaed—the proprietor and his wife continued under arrest in their gospodinsky dom.

Another subject of general interest among the proprietors present — because affecting most of them—was that of a recent ukase, which enacted that a certain measurement of land—a mere strip —should be left in grass on each side of the high

* This case was not settled when I left the Government in October; and the whole of the intermediate time, the couple in question remained prisoners in the hands of their own peasants.

road for its whole length, throughout every estate. This seems to be a most merciful provision for the vast droves of cattle which are constantly passing from the rich governments of the south and east, *en route* to St. Petersburg and Moscow. The poor beasts suffer dreadfully in the summer, literally dropping down exhausted by the way, for the villages, as we have seen, are few and far between, nor is it at everyone that immense droves of four and five hundred animals of this size could be accommodated either with standing room or with food; their only resting-place hitherto has been the rutty, dusty roads on the highway, or the dvartza, the square or place which, like the "greens" of our villages, occupies an important place in every hamlet, town, or village in Russia.

The wealth of *terrain* enjoyed by some of these proprietors may be best gathered from the fact that such a length of highway runs through them, that this strip, taken by the Crown for the use of the cattle, in superficial measurement, forms quite a desirable little property in itself. They therefore mean to appeal to the Tzar, and as all see the necessity, and appreciate the humanity, of this measure, they intend proposing to give up a large space—say several acres—upon each estate, and to supply the animals with food as well.

While the elders thus discussed subjects nearest

their homes, the younger ladies, promenading up and down through the suite, talked over with the daughters of their host the subject of their travels, especially of their visit to Paris, an event which appears to be in the sight of most young people in Russia—whether of the country or the capital—the very acme of their earthly ambition. Aleen, the child of our party, also had her "reception," and juveniles of five, seven, and eight, romped about in everybody's way—the custom of children, in a natural state, all over the world—but which the little precocities of the capitals entirely ignore.

Among the oldest friends of the family, and the more interesting of the guests, were three "spinsters" of a certain age; who appeared, however, to be all of one age, all dressed alike, and all of one way of thinking. The Mesdames de T—— were charming specimens of Russian old maids, benign and cheerful, always happy, full of kindness to everybody, to children and animals in particular, the very types of those honoured ones at home who are usually to be found in old-fashioned brick houses, built up and down, and in and out, with a well-pointed front, covered with clematis and china roses, whose windows shine cheerfully even on sunless days, in whose gardens the box borders grow fuller and higher than anywhere else, whose shrubs are cut into pea-

cocks and owls, where the cabbage-rose grows reddest and the peaches largest, who savour of sweet herbs, cowslip-wine, currant-cakes, and sugar-plums, and are notorious to every child for miles around. Such were the Mesdames de T——, the most excellent of their kind, and simple as little children themselves.

But the *avant courrier* of dinner arrives. The Gruyère cheese, radishes, sardines, and sweet votka have gone their round; and now comes a footman with his bow and his "f coushnia gatovas," or, dinner is served or ready, and the ladies walk off in pairs, and some of the gentlemen have offered their escort, while others, preferring single blessedness to double duty, stride off alone, the children bringing up the rear, now discreetly quiet; and at length the party are seated at table, fifty or more, and all free and easy like one large family, the footman of each visitor taking his share of the waiting.

The bills of fare here are much the same as in the great cities, but that sterlit abounds, being found in the Zna, about six versts distant. This delicacy is made into soup, and otherwise used most lavishly; flesh and fowl, as usual, make up the *plats de resistance*, with *entremets* and vegetables innumerable, ices of various kinds being every day adjuncts to the dinner-table throughout the summer.

After dinner, the usual observances of grace and kissing the hand of the hostess being terminated, all retire to the Gastinoë, where coffee and cigarettes are presented, many of the ladies partaking of the latter as habitually as they do of the former; the younger ladies meanwhile rove all over the house and grounds.

Coffee is scarcely over, when fruit is served on the table in the *salle à manger*, round which the younger members of the assembly congregate, while servants convey it hence to the elders, who generally remain in the Gastinoë, the gentlemen being too much absorbed with their whist and cigarettes to care for such things.

After the fruit comes music, for mostly every member of a Russian *réunion* is a musician, and seldom do six meet but one of them is sure to play with the skill of an *artiste;* and in this respect the country offers even a more extensive field for maturing this universally popular art than the city, with its more numerous exactions. Some choice *morceaux* from the old fathers of music having been performed by one of the young ladies, to the delight of all listeners, a Terpsichorean devotee in the distant perspective of the music-room strikes up a merry dance tune, and all subordinate sounds become merged in the mighty swell of the splendid organ, at the sum-

mons of which, light skiffing feet irresistibly skim the polished *parquet*, and couple after couple twirl on "light fantastic toe," winding round the columns, and round the prosy whist players, and with a sweeping *glissade* or two, back to the *salon de danse*. Big and little, all twirl, and pirouette, and glide, and galop, and enjoy the exhilarating dance for its own sake, and never seem to tire.

At eight o'clock, tea is served, and again the younger portion of the party take possession of the table, the eldest daughter of the house doing the honours; the party in the Gastinoë being waited upon by servants—veritable running footmen—who keep up a perpetual circulation through the entire suite.

Immediately after tea the guests begin to depart—many of them have thirty and forty miles to drive; but then it must be recollected, night is the chosen time with a Russian for transacting all business of this kind, for he sleeps as sound as he would in bed, and thus saves his time.

All the members of the family accompany their guests into the vestibule, aiding them in their travelling toilet; one helping on with a hood, another with a refractory overboot—nights are cold. And this is succeeded by a series of old-fashioned embraces—warm, and thoroughly expressive; tightly-grasped hands, and sincere and

heartfelt expressions of mutual regret at parting; anticipations of soon meeting again; warm invitations to pass weeks at half-a-dozen tempting places at once. And they are at length all gone, the silver-sounding jingle of the last departing wolf-bell remaining on the ear, like a pleasant thought on the mind, long after the subject of it has passed away.

Prepared, as I had been, for an introduction to frights and oddities of all kinds on my arrival in the interior, I was not a little surprised and pleased to find society here, in nearly every respect, the reverse of what it had been represented, even by the Peterburghers themselves. Many of the matrons, it is true, are in arrears with the Paris fashions, but they are in advance with their household duties, and the conduct of their families, and the "usefuls" rather than the "ornamentals" of life.

If the young ladies are less accomplished and less self-possessed than those of the city, they are at least modest and natural. In the interior, a young girl may blush and escape a reprimand for such a *gaucherie*, but in St. Petersburg, such an incident would be a nine days' wonder, and every woman near would pronounce her *une malheureuse*.

Dinner-guests are rare on week days, the exceptions being an occasional passing acquaintance *en*

route to Moscow, officials on local or crown business, and the commanding officer of a detachment *in transitu*, whose quarters would otherwise be the village post-house.

Soldiers thus passing are billeted on the peasantry. The principal officer, or officers, take up their abode at the post-house, but send to the *gospodin* of the estate, or *celo*, on which they may have happened to settle, for whatever they want for their table. Sometimes the request for such supplies reached the Count—an old soldier himself—on highly-perfumed pink paper, which contained a list of delicacies most lady-like in their selection. From others, it was the corner of brown paper, or the back of a letter, or anything that came to hand; sometimes curt, sometimes barely civil, occasionally polite, and not unfrequently a Suvaroff-like verbal request for bread and salt; to all of which, save the first, the Count paid the most prompt attention, first sending to request that the officer or officers would make the manor-house their home while they were in the neighbourhood; or, if they preferred remaining at the change-house, he gave orders that the best the house contained should be dispatched to them forthwith; and three times as much as they could possibly use. But in the case of the pink note, he just sent exactly what was demanded, but not a fraction more, and that

deferred long enough to try a hungry man's patience to the last extremity.

> And much I fear my mournful air
> Shall, like a dismal cloud,
> Their sportive plays and pastimes fair
> With gloomy shade enshroud.
> But I've a wound that rankles here,
> Within my tortured heart;
> No balm can sooth the cankered core,
> No charm allay its smart.
> —*Translated from the Russ, by Mr. Dobell.*

Besides the occasional dinner-guests before enumerated, there were two others, who frequently visited Krasnoë-Celo, but never made their appearance on Sunday-receptions, or on occasions of ceremony. One of these was a Tartar prince, poor, noble, and proud—a man of handsome exterior, a perfect Malech Adel as to looks,—of stately mien and lofty intellect, but around whom hung a gloom so oppressive, and, moreover, so contagious, we were generally glad when dinner terminated, that we might forget, in lively converse among ourselves, or in music, the care which was our's by sympathy alone.

The history of the Prince was a melancholy one. His wife, a beautiful and accomplished woman, had eloped with one whom he had esteemed as a friend for many years, leaving him with five boys—the eldest about eight years old—

to mourn, first her infamy, and then her death; for, a fortnight after she left her husband's roof, she met her end by a singular accident. The poor Prince reflected on himself for this double misery. He attributed her fall to his own jealousy, and his continual surveillance of her, and tormented himself perpetually with some supposed new reason which had influenced her in taking such a step.

Two years had already elapsed since her death, but both he and his little boys still wore deep mourning. Happily, the little fellows never knew their mother's shame; but as their father never lost sight of them for an instant, the gloom to which he was a prey overshadowed the boys, and the two eldest—who usually accompanied him—pale, pensive, noble-looking little creatures, looked on with their large gazelle-like eyes at Aleen's gambols, as if such indulgence were forbidden to them. All invitations to join her in play were rejected with a quiet, gentle refusal, and no inducement could prevail on them to leave their father's side, where they usually stood, the arms of the elder entwining the younger, and one of the widower's round both. Poor man! the picture was a most melancholy one, whoever was to blame.

The other occasional guest at Krasnoë-Celo was of a totally different stamp. A rough,

jocular, plain-spoken Russian jockey and horse-dealer, a man well known in all the country round for his probity, and one, moreover, who finds a hearty welcome at the tables of the first noblemen in the Government. His conversation, which was generally replete with anecdotes of horses, was intensely interesting, for being a natural admirer of all horse-kind, he never felt so much at his ease as when on this, his favourite, topic.

He is now nearly seventy years of age, but talks of what he is to do as if he were a boy. For the last thirty years he has driven his own race-horses at both capitals. Many anecdotes are circulated, among his admirers, of his characteristic virtues, and the following is one particularly illustrative of a principle he had adopted from early life—viz., of asking at once the value of his horses and never taking less.

One morning early, a miserable-looking old man, accompanied by another of the same type, but evidently the servant of the former, drove up to the house of the horse-dealer, and requested to be shown some of his finest horses for harness.

The dealer produced his very best, and after looking, and debating, and looking again, the old man selected a set of four fine bays, and demanded their price.

"Thirty thousand rubles," returned the dealer.

"I will give you 25,000," said the tatterdemallion.

"I ask at once the only price I can take for them," said the horse-dealer, with a low bow.

Upon which the ragged pair turned round and walked out, returning, however, as the custom is, a few minutes after, to enquire what would be the lowest price.

"I have asked the only price I mean to take," persisted the dealer, flushing with displeasure, "viz., 30,000 rubles."

"Ach! then good bye to ye—30,000 rubles! that I shall certainly not give," muttered the old man, and away he went once more.

Weeks elapsed, when on the horse-dealer's taking possession of a new residence in Moscow, it was thrown open to all his friends and acquaintance. According to a very old custom upon such an occasion, anyone who can scrape up the most remote bowing acquaintance claims to be recognized, and repairs to this inaugurative ceremony, where refreshments are provided on a wholesale scale.

To the surprise of the hero of the feast, whom should he behold, pushing his way towards him through the well-packed crowd, but the shabby old customer in rags, followed by his ragged attendant? Drawing him on one side in a quiet corner, he put to him once more the momentous question:—

"What is the very lowest you will take for the horses?"

"Forty thousand rubles," returned the dealer, with his characteristic nonchalance.

"Bring the knife," said the old man, with a desperate effort through his closed teeth; "and make haste," he continued, addressing his servant, fearful that the dealer might pop on another ten thousand ere he could return.

More than once, while he was gone, the dealer revolved in his mind the meaning of this singular request of the old man to his attendant; but dreading little danger of violence, surrounded as he was by friends, he waited with some curiosity the *dénouement.*

At length the tattered footman returned, and the surprise of the horse-dealer was by no means trifling, to see the formidable knife he carried applied to the side of the old man, where, after cutting a net-work of stitches that covered the lining of a patched undercoat, a long slit was exposed to view, whence protruded a thick book of paper notes, out of which he counted down the 40,000 rubles, much to the surprise of the dealer, who imagined he would have made an energetic appeal in order to avoid payment of the last ten thousand, which had been added to the price of the bays since his last visit.

This extraordinary customer proved to be a

nobleman of high rank, and wealthy as a Crœsus; but knowing how his countrymen drove bargains, he always donned the garb and air of poverty, to get an article as cheap as he could.

Morning visitors, as may be premised, are also few and far between; in short, hitherto we have seen but two who are really and exclusively such, and these are deemed "peculiarities" of their kind, local "notabilities," who reside on their "celo" all the year round. This worthy couple seldom give parties, or go out; but the lady considers it her especial duty to call upon every new comer in that part of the country for leagues around; her husband, however, thinks differently, and combats the point with the greatest obstinacy. The fact is, it is too much trouble; but his better half—with the pertinacity of the sex—persists, and the array of argument which she brings to bear on the case in point is so conclusive, that he at length yields, and is finally persuaded to put on a decent coat and to brush up his hair, &c. After a mighty effort they get into their carriage, and fatigued with the exertion, each sinks into a corner, the lady to steal "fifty winks," and the gentleman meanwhile to sit, the very personification of quiescence, doing nothing, thinking nothing, looking at nothing; while the fat horses and easy coachman jog on at snail's canter, for he loves his "little doves" too well to drive them hard.

At the conclusion of the "fifty winks," up starts madame, and wishes to know why they progress so slowly, and begins to scold. The coachman swears he has been driving at the "devil's own speed" while she slept, and he won't do it any more; and "suiting the action to the word," slackens his already slow pace.

"Leave him alone," says the indolent husband, "he knows best."

And so down sinks the lady once more, and resumes her nap, and the husband his state of semi-dormancy, until both are recalled to active life and the necessity of making another exertion by the stoppage of their cavalry at the door of those for whom so much honor is in perspective.

Having once entered, they do nothing but bow right and left, speak in monosyllables, sit upon thorns, feeling most uneasy in their holiday clothes, and make everybody feel the same.

Fortunately they never remain very long, and the sound of their slowly departing wheels is the greatest possible relief to all parties.

Happily, "eccentrics" like these are not very common; indeed, one pair is found to be quite enough for the government, large as it is. But take society here as a whole, the *reasonable* stranger must feel astonished at the amount of refinement, rather than the want of it, which is apparent even in the establishments of the smallest

landed proprietors, the perfect isolation of which, with their distances from cities, and towns, and gatherings of their kind, must also be considered. I have often regarded with surprise the elegant and accomplished girls I have met in the *salons* of the remote interior; young ladies who had never visited even Moscow, their beloved white-stoned mother herself, or strayed beyond the chief town of their native government of Tambov, yet they could speak French fluently, and write far superior French letters to most French women themselves; for as to education generally, the Russian ladies leave their French types far behind them. German is also a common acquirement, and English, though much less so, is nevertheless frequently to be met with, and spoken extremely well. Music is the popular accomplishment, however, in which the peasants often excel, their national musical instrument being a rough specimen of the Spanish guitar; nor are the ladies of the interior at all at a loss for subjects of conversation. The tongues of the sex chatter as glibly here as elsewhere; for there are the thousand and one little incidents of home life to be discussed and commented on; and new patterns of bonnets, and parasols, and mantilles to exchange; or the last cut of a child's surtout or blouse to be adopted or rejected. These may be deemed puerilities—perhaps so; but happily the construction of society

here, the great distance families are separated from each other, their local entirety, exclude anything like the slanderous gossip and illiberality of village communion *chez nous*.

CHAPTER XI.

Appearance of the Russian Serf—His Peculiar *Chaussure*—Origin of Serfdom in Russia—Serfs and Free Peasants—Projected Emancipation of the Serfs—Difficulty of Interfering with them—Absurd Comparison of the Serf with the Negro.

THE Russian serf is neither cowed nor abject in appearance, but even dignified; he walks erect, speaks as correctly as his master, prefaces his address to the stranger with a graceful bow, and answers questions put to him with a straightforward look and easy flow of thought and word. He has nothing of the boor about him; is easy and good-tempered, fond of ease; yet none can "rough it" more patiently and uncomplainingly than he. He learns readily anything he is taught, and his powers of imitation are inimitable. He has a capital ear for music, and is an expert performer

either on the Russian three-stringed guitar, or on the violin, is sure to dance well, and almost to a certainty sings well. He is fond of children, animals, flowers, and brilliant colours; and values a watch, a violin, tea or votka, and his bath; but the salient sympathy of his life is his religion. This is constantly apparent in his going out and his coming in; nor does he partake of a cup of cold water without asking God's blessing on the same. His voice is powerful and harmonious; his temper warm, and if irritated, he showers a tempest of words upon the object of his wrath, but seldom proceeds to blows. He is by no means implacable; obstinately wedded to his own customs and habits, any infringement on these evokes his deepest passions, which, once roused, are most difficult to pacify.

The ordinary dress of the men of this class is a loose collarless blouse, or shirt, generally pink, with blue gussets, and trousers of tick or canvas, and over all, a coarse brown long-skirted coat, or caftan; for lighter wear, a blouse of hop-sack, but rarely, even at Midsummer, is he to be seen without his beloved winter sheep-skin surtout, which he then wears like a cloak, with the sleeves hanging loose, and open in front, and often, in the military manteau style, over one shoulder only; for, strange as it may appear, a Russian is the chilliest mortal under the sun.

As to his *chaussure*, the Russian peasant is peculiar, for occasionally over—but oftener without—his stocking, he rolls several yards of bandage, precisely as a surgeon would bind up a broken bone; and there are several good reasons for this. In all probability, this is the original stocking of the Slavenoë, for however much dress may vary in the different governments of the empire—and scarcely two villages agree in this respect—yet the manner of swathing the foot and leg, from the toes to the knee, is universal throughout Russia Proper. Some use linen, others woollen; white is the prevailing colour, though black is by no means uncommon. In the winter, the serfs wear felt or leather boots over these bandages, and in summer a slipper made of bass—the bark of the linden tree—which is tied on with sandals warped round the leg. Now, one of the best reasons that can be adduced for continuing the use of this primitive arrangement is, that nearly every part of Russia is infested with mosquitoes, and the ankles and instep are choice *pièces de resistance* with these long-legged *gourmands*, who insert their fine hair-like proboscides through the coarsest stocking, while the many folds of the peasant's "leggins" most effectually protect their "understandings" from the attacks of these ever-prowling enemies. A second good reason for the use of this extraordinary covering — which has been so much

ridiculed by strangers, as rags, &c.—is perhaps even more cogent. Both felt and leather boots, after a fortnight's wear, grow limp and soft, and the foot and leg begin to find that even in this space-loving country they have more than enough and to spare, and that at every step these overalls threaten to bid adieu to their owners by the way. Like the bit of paper rolled round the tiny digit of a child, to adapt her neighbour's larger thimble to her own smaller finger, so another roll of the bandage obviates the difficulty of the boot, and retains it snugly in its place for a time. I have seen an old pair of peasant-boots stretched out in this way until the owner might have put both his feet into one of them.

In his winter wraps a Russian moujic is a formidable-looking being, but notwithstanding his shaggy garb and shaggy beard, and oft times shaggy *chevelure*, his air of manly self-possession evokes one's confidence and even respect; and his kind-hearted hospitality, his amiability and gentleness, disarm the most timid foreigner of distrust; Madame Cottin justly appreciated the character of the Russian peasants when she delivered up the young and unprotected Elizabeth to their sympathy. During her long dreary wanderings, that young girl was as safe from harm as if surrounded by a guard of armed men, for she was among brothers and friends.

The serf, under the progressive rule of the Emperor Nicholas, is more a vassal than of yore a chattel of his lord. Of the 60,000,000 inhabitants of Russia, 12,000,000 are serfs, and about the same number are free peasants; of these, 9,000,000 are Crown peasants, who are better off than any of the other free men, who with themselves are divided into six classes. Between 40,000 and 50,000 are free peasants who enjoy a tenure of land, on condition of supplying horses, carriages, and drivers for the postal communication. Every thirty males supply a *troika*—one vehicle, three horses, and a driver. This body, called *Yemschikii*, are free from conscription; a small sum is paid to them for the distance their horses are driven. Many of these are flourishing farmers, and grow wealthy. About 100,000 free peasants are employed in the Crown forests; they also hold as much land as they can cultivate, having in addition small wages for their labour, which is entirely confined to the forests. There is also a class who have never been serfs, amounting to between 200,000 and 300,000. About 1,000,000 more are serfs who have been liberated, and nearly half a million are employed on the Crown domains. The Crown peasants are at liberty to go where they like, and grow wealthy as they like, by the adoption of any pursuit they may choose. The majority congregate in villages, forming a commonwealth, all working at the same

trade, and subject to self-imposed laws, regulated by a chief, called *Galova* (head). Immense labour contracts are sometimes undertaken by these bodies through their mouth-piece, the *Galova*, who becomes responsible that they shall faithfully carry out what he has undertaken for them. The whole body is likewise responsible for the shortcomings of any of its members. Each male has as much land as he can cultivate, on payment of a small tribute in money, labour, or produce.

It appears to a passing observer that when the serfs are all free, and competition in trade shall permeate like a healthy and necessary stimulant through the land, from these commonwealths will spring a class, hitherto unknown in Russia, viz., small manufacturers and artizans, both of which, growing into life like the operations of Nature, "slow and sure," will diffuse a more certain and "standard" influence on the general good of the country, than any forced or precociously developed and affluently supported trading operation on a large scale can or will ever effect.

The women also work in this way. They make slippers of bass—the universal wear of both sexes during the summer—pottles for fruit and bonbons, &c. They embroider in gold, silver, and silks on coloured leather. They knit stockings, spin, and even weave fine linen, and make great quantities of beautiful lace. The choicest of this lace is reserved

for regular customers, and the second best is put up in a bundle and hawked by an old woman from door to door. Some of these bundles contain stock to the value of £150.

This commonwealth system is also in vogue among the serfs. The serfs are as inseparable from the land as the land is from them; indeed, this is the pith and essence of Russian serfdom, for so vagrant were the habits of the Russians that, 200 years ago, Boris Godunoff, hoping to benefit his country and people, tied the agricultural labourer to the land, from which he could neither remove nor be removed. This was the origin of serfdom in Russia, and as it existed in the early days of its institution, was doubtless a wise and kind provision both for master and man. At the time the ukase was issued, every peasant was assigned to the land which he had cultivated up to a certain period, and the land to him, for his sole use and benefit, after deducting a trifling return to the lord of the manor, either in labour or produce. They were in short the holders of a long lease, at a small ground-rent, without purchase. The serfs on many estates hold these conditions even now; but, as a general rule, the lords, or their overseers, or both, gradually encroached on the time and labour of the workmen, exacting, over and above the original ground-rent, three days labour in every week, or in lieu of this, the whole of

the harvest time, besides employing them in menial offices about their persons or dwellings, and taking them as domestics to the cities, and even out of the empire; unlawfully exercising the power of life and death over them, inflicting corporeal punishment and many other impositions which have gradually ripened into a right, in the same way that with us in England old customs become fixed as law, such as the right of a public pathway through a private estate. Peter the Great made the first stand against these encroachments, and in his time the first commonwealths were instituted; but intermediate sovereigns, until we come to the first Alexander, appear to have done little towards the elevation of this class to something like their former independent position. That magnanimous monarch resolved to wipe off the epithet of "slaves" from his people—a nation as little meriting such a misnomer as any on the face of the earth, and which could never have been misapplied to them but by an enemy, or by those entirely ignorant of the national character—but his lamented death put a stop to his own pious resolves, though it doubtless accelerated his noble designs; for it is a question whether the amiable, gentle Alexander would, or could, ever have issued those resolute ukases, bearing upon the amelioration of these 12,000,000 "souls," which were promulgated by the Jus-

tinian, Nicholas, and dating from the very commencement of his reign. By these vigorous laws the serf is guaranteed the sole possession of whatever wealth he may acquire; for previous to the reign of this Emperor, they buried their overplus money in the earth, for fear of its being taken by their masters. Large sums were thus deposited, and in the meantime are lost, for the depositors dying suddenly, or being taken as soldiers, and never returning to their homes, had no power to will away their treasure. By these laws the *obrock*, or tribute paid by the serf to his lord, is reduced to a certain amount. It is no longer in the power of the master to regulate so important a question *ad libitum*. Another momentous enactment is, that a serf cannot now be sent beyond a certain distance, occupying a certain time, or engaged in any responsible business traffic or transaction that imposes upon him certain contingencies he could not foresee. For example, a noble lady whom I met occasionally in St. Petersburg, had an estate on the confines of Siberia, and all through the winter she was in the habit of having her house in St. Petersburg supplied with farm produce from this estate. Several serfs did nothing else but carry backwards and forwards; nor was this the extent of the infliction—if a thaw overtook the poor fellows on the road, the poultry, game, pork, or other "perish-

ables" which they conveyed, would consequently be useless to their proprietor ere they could reach her; but, notwithstanding, they were obliged to make good to her whatever portion, or all, of what might happen to be destroyed! This particular incident is said to have reached the Emperor, and a law to meet this fresh contingency was instantly promulgated.

In short, it appears evident that only by "cutting back," one by one, the encroachments which in the course of 200 years have surrounded the serf, and so reducing, or rather elevating him to the primitive position he enjoyed on his first assignment to the land, is the great difficulty of his emancipation, likely to be solved without danger to himself, or his well wishers. As far as a foreigner can understand, it is precisely the difficulty of the Chinese ring puzzle, in which every ring having been carefully and patiently worked in and out, over and under, and round about each other, up to a certain point, has to be worked off again backwards in the same manner, this retrograde movement being the only means by which the "bow" can be freed from its shackles without violence to the instruments employed.

Few strangers, unacquainted with the Russian serf of the interior, can form the most vague notion of the stupendous character of this serf emancipation movement, either as touching the

vexations attendant on dealing with the serf himself, or the incalculable benefit that must accrue to the country at large from a new system of voluntary labour. But the first difficulty will be to make this child of nature understand what freedom really means; even that side of the medal which gives to him so much; far more the obverse, with its responsibilities, and ennobling exactions, and necessary exertions, and self-abnegation! Were these people ill-used, over-worked, ill-fed, houseless, and friendless, one might begin their first lesson on freedom by telling them that "freedom" meant relief from all these inflictions *if they chose.* But they do not suffer in this way; and therefore, to put the problem in another form, and tell them that henceforth they have no master but their sovereign; that if their crops fail, they have no seigneur's well-filled stores—filled for them—to fall back upon: if they are ill, they must pay—and, what would be still more difficult in some localities must find—a doctor. In short, that they are free; that is, upon their own resources, the penalty or the glory of freedom; and therefore they must husband their means for such times of need; the source of these means being in their own voluntary exertions; that, being thus free, they must no longer style their seigneur's pretty daughters

"our's;" nor his house "our's;" nor anything that he hath "our's;" for they are no longer "his;" that they need not even work unless they like; and that they may go whithersoever it pleaseth them. That their old masters have no power to keep them with him, and that, therefore, he is equally free to do what he pleases with his own; that he may grow potatoes* where he likes; that he may sweep off entire villages from the face of his estate, and scatter the population and houses of others twenty miles apart! To Russian serfs, with their precedents and prejudices, their "red tape and routine," and adhesion to habits as old as the world, this sweeping reform would appear to them an outrage on every sympathy of their simple natures, evoking corresponding opposition and dissent.

* The serfs and peasants of the interior have the greatest aversion to potatoes; they will not even touch them with their fingers. They call them "devil's apples," and entertain the utmost horror of them. I remember, at Tambov, a nobleman having bought a small property contiguous to his own, for the sake of the peasants—who, though few in number, were more than the land could support, for it consisted almost entirely of sand, like that which in England is called "silver sand," so valuable to the nurseryman, but which here, for cereals, was useless—drove a party of ladies to look at it, the situation being so picturesque. "There," he said, pointing to the immense hilly tract of sand. "What am I to do with it?" "Grow potatoes," I suggested. "You are right," he returned. "I might produce enough there to supply half Moscow, but my people will not touch them—they would not plant them." I could never discover the cause of this prejudice.

Many absurd comparisons have been drawn between the Russian serf and the negro; but these no more admit of an equality than the colour of their skins.* The former has grown out of an almost patriarchal institution, while the latter is the basest oppression of a free people that ever disgraced mankind. The Russian serf is an independent chieftain in comparison. He has laws made for his protection, and if he finds that these are evaded, he knows where to seek redress, and finds it too. But, alas! the poor negro has no laws, no power of appeal to man; his only hope, where his owner is a bad master, is flight to more genial climes, or the grave!

But with all his simplicity and apparent easy disposition, the Russian serf of the interior is the most difficult creature in creation to deal with, as regards the introduction of reform in matters connected with himself. He cannot comprehend the principle which induces his superiors to

* Though some foreigners affirm that even in this respect they assimilate, as they are called by their superiors the "charnâya ludi," or black people, while others translate it "dirty" people. Now they might just as well translate "charnâya hleb," or black bread, "dirty" bread; or "charnâya me-ott," black honey, "dirty honey. For the so-called black bread is not black but brown, or "dark;" the so-called black honey is not black, but "dark"—being wild-bee produce; neither are the charnâya ludi" black people, nor "dirty" people, but "dark," from the colour of their faces, the result of exposure to the elements.

trouble themselves about his internal affairs, and appears to think that, while he leaves them alone, they are bound to do the same by him. It is this stolid aversion to change, to any innovation on what he conceives to be his rights and privileges, added to his more philosophic than progressive motto, "What did for my father will do for me," which renders him so difficult to approach in the march of progress.

Voluntary emancipation from his present habits will only be the result of his own gradually matured convictions. In his more enlightened aspect, the serf allows none to coerce or wheedle him with impunity; and while this race lies under the sympathy of the world as the slaves of their masters—with all those masters' multiplied encroachments—there is, perhaps, no peasantry in the world, virtually, more free and independent of their superiors. The majority of landed proprietors evidently desire the emancipation of their serfs, being well aware of the disadvantages of enforced labour. The drawbacks to this system are obvious to the least observant stranger. The serf tilling his own land and working for himself is quite a different being from the serf working for his master, and that, too, where the utmost kindness and consideration is testified towards him. In the former case, he sings and works happily and actively; in the latter, mutely, silently, and heavily,

his day's labour often amounting to little more than a British labourer would have accomplished in a couple of hours. Yet, this prejudiced creature is quick, and teachable, and fond, and proud of acquiring knowledge, when he has once overcome the first elements of a thing. In buying and selling, particularly, he very soon becomes an adept; his native kindness of heart, his astuteness, and above all, his natural eloquence, being so many sure aids to the acquisition of wealth in this country. When Russia shall be all free, it needs no *clairvoyant* power to prophecy what her ultimate destiny will be. But in the meantime, this dogged spirit of non-intervention in their affairs rides rampant through the land, setting the energetic efforts of the more progressive proprietor at defiance, and often paralysing his best efforts to improve his property. An interesting case in point will be found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

The Chimney Question—Arrival of the Deputation—The Threatening Letter—Important Discovery—The Count Detects the Writer of the Letter—Daniel Koulikoff Confesses—His Punishment—The Seigneur's Absence—A Surprise on his Return—Peasant "plenishing"—The Serf-woman's National Dress—Her Jewels—Anecdote by Poushkin.

NOT many years ago, in Russia, the one universal means of escape for the superfluous smoke, which filled every nook and corner of a Russian cottage, was by means of a square hole cut in the gable; and as these log-huts generally stand gable-end to the road, the effect of these spurting jets, in nearly horizontal lines along both sides of the highway, may be imagined, and if we add the chubby face of a child protruding at the same place—encircled with curling clouds, like a cherub in a badly-painted picture—the features of this cottage scene are complete. At length a request

from "head-quarters" was made to the proprietors of "*Celos*," or estates, in a particular part of the interior, urging them to use their best endeavours to introduce chimneys upon the log-huts of their people. In some instances this request was carried out by being enforced; in others, it was resolutely resisted by the peasants; and by the majority of the proprietors it was entirely neglected, simply from the grave difficulties which its fulfilment presented.

After a few years, the Crown again applied, but this time it was in the form of a ukase, and the lords of the soil, seeing that something must be done, set to work, some in one way, and some in another; but the following relation will show the one universal difficulty which uprose in the path of each, and which has in most cases been [illegible]ed only by the same antidote, viz., conviction of the benefits arising from the reform, and which, with all his prejudices, the serf is open to, if happily the test is but discreetly applied.

This question of chimneys had been first mooted in the time of my friend's grandfather, but on his own accession to the property most of the cottages were still without chimneys. The new lord—who had never spent a day in the country previously, and knew nothing of the peculiarities of the people—gave orders that chimneys were to appear on every log-hut roof instanter and simul-

taneously. And then such a hue and cry arose as one ignorant of the cause might well have attributed to a struggle for life or death, or, dearer far to them, the fate of their religion. "Indeed," added the narrator, "I am not sure but their ancestors made less noise about the destruction of all their gods, with old Peroun at the head of them, than did these foolish people about the planting of chimneys on their huts.

The Count, however, was resolute, and so were they. A deputation, selected from the heads of the community, waited upon their young master, to know if he was serious in his request. They urged their old custom with some eloquence, and argued with the weight of sense and truth on their side, "that they were at all times ready and willing to work his lands as he liked best—to use the strange implements and new contrivances brought from the land of the Germans* into their Holy Russia; but then his lands were his own, and they, his servants, must do their master's bidding, but their houses were their own, and surely they might do with them what they pleased. Their Fathers never had chimneys, and why should they?"

But the Count was inexorable, and nothing would satisfy him but the much-contested chimneys. The deputation made their bow and departed

* The ignorant suppose that it is Germany everywhere beyond the limits of Russia.

—but that same night the Count found a letter on the writing-table in his cabinet. None knew whence it came, or how it got there. It contained a warning that, if he attempted to put his threat into execution, his house should be burned to the ground.

Heedless of this also, the Count continued to carry out his plans; a few nights after, the watchmen discovered that a large portion of the building, which stood in a garden—therefore out of their immediate beat—presented a curious appearance. On the Count being apprised of it, he discovered that one entire side of it had been rubbed over with a preparation of phosphorus, which, on the sun's attaining an hour's altitude next morning, would have set the whole building in a blaze, for the generality of these houses are constructed of wood.

Determined to discover the chiefs in this conspiracy, the Count fell upon a plan well worthy of a London detective. Sending to such of the serf inhabitants of the disaffected village as he knew could read and write, he requested them to come to his house at a certain hour on the following day; when they arrived, they were all shewn into a large room, and called one by one into his cabinet. Here the Count made each of them write a sentence, agreeing letter for letter with one in the threatening epistle. Already a consi-

derable number had written the sentence and passed on to an inner room, where, the moment each entered, he was locked in, when a rather handsome, daring-looking fellow boldly entered, cap in hand, and made his bow.

The Count handed him a pen, pointing to the sentence he was to copy and to sign with his name. He took the pen with a hand slightly convulsed, and casting his eye over the sentence before him, stammered out:—

"I did not write it."

"Write what, my friend?" said the Count.

"Why, the letter," he replied, looking at the same time down at his boots.

"We shall see," returned the seigneur; "write, write."

And having performed the object for which he was sent, the master examined it, and drawing forth the obnoxious letter, laid both on the table, side by side. They were identically the same, word for word and letter for letter, which the Count clearly perceiving, laid it boldly to his visitor's charge. Daniel Koulikoff, seeing that it was all over with him, threw himself on his knees at the Count's feet, confessed that he had written the letter, and begged forgiveness; but who his accomplices were, and who placed the letter on the table, I am happy to say, no persuasion, no threat, no coaxing, could induce him to divulge,

and all the Count ever learned on the subject from him, was, that he had accomplices, and a good many too.

The Count, fortunately, could appreciate the character he had to deal with, and managed accordingly.

"Rise, brother," said the master, "it is only before God that man should bow the knee; I freely forgive you, and hope that our Father up there,"—pointing to heaven—"will do the same."

And laying before the child-like mind of his serf the true nature of the great sin of which he had been guilty, our noble Count forgave him freely on one condition—and what was that?—the chimneys again?—yes, verily. He forgave him on the simple condition that he should build a chimney to his cottage forthwith; and that he and his successors should continue to use decent chimneys to their dwellings, henceforth and for ever.

The Count went abroad for several years after this, and soon after his return he was one day overtaken by a thunderstorm, on the outskirts of a village not very far from his own house. Seeking shelter in the nearest cottage, he was struck with the bright-eyed, cheerful, fresh look of its mistress and her barefooted "bairns." Asking the name of her husband, the long-forgotten story of the chimneys, with all its grave and comical

concomitants, rose to his recollection, for this was the identical dwelling of Koulikoff—that first roof which sported a chimney in the now "go-ahead" village of Andrèvsky—that little colony which might still have been a victim to smoke, demi-twilight, and a miserable blear-eyed population, but for the easy punishment of Daniel Koulikoff, and the subsequent *conviction* of Daniel and his wife, that the improved state of their sight and the superiority of their children's fresh joyous looks over those of their neighbours, arose from the clearer atmosphere of their home. This discovery happily extended—slowly, it is true, but nevertheless it did extend—to all the good folks of Andrèvsky, and now not a cottage would be tolerated without its chimney.

As soon as a peasant youth is of marriageable age, his Gospodin gives him a piece of land to grow his corn, seed to sew it, wood to build a house, a cow, a horse, a plough, and several other items. He has generally a bride in view, and every peasant maiden—after the old Scottish fashion—brings home, as her "tocher," her own homespun, in the shape of towels ornamented with red stripes and fine open work at the ends, her own coarse but highly ornamented body-linen, her working dress and her seraphân, or national costume, which is extremely picturesque, and often rich and very costly. This is composed of

a crimson cotton or silk skirt, striped down the front with gold braid, and dotted with small pendent gold buttons. This skirt, which is very full, has an extremely shallow bodice, and is suspended by broad straps of the same from the shoulders. Under this is worn a very fine and very full garment of snow-white linen, having full sleeves, confined by a band at the elbows. Her head-dress, or pavonick,—from pavon, or peacock—resembles in shape the tail of that bird when fully spread, and is generally covered with gold or silver cloth, silk, satin, velvet, or brocade, and ornamented with embroidery in silver or gold, or with spangles. From the termination of this, at the napé of the neck, hang ribbons of all lengths, widths, and colours, and even scarfs, many of them reaching to her very heels, and which, with the slightest breeze or movement, flutter about, and produce the prettiest effect. A long, full book muslin apron, frilled round with lace, and striped as with tucks of gold and silver and bright-coloured ribbons, is also a part of the dress, though often, for want of means, it is dispensed with, being rather a costly item. The shoes are of cloth of gold or silver, or of silk embroidered with gold or silver. Like the Highland maidens of the present day, who, to appear respectable in the kirk, walk barefooted to it, —reversing the Turkish custom—carrying their

chaussure in their hands, not on their feet, so do these Russian women, on a "prasnic," or holiday, when they assemble in a field at some distance from their village, to dance and sing, always carry their "golden" shoes wrapped up in a pocket handkerchief, only sporting them on the green sward of their rustic ball-room. The effect of a hundred or more of these gorgeously-dressed belles presents a highly imposing tableau.

Thus provided, the young couple commence their new life. Three days' labour they give to their seigneur, reserving as holidays all the fasts, whether these fall in the seigneur's three days, or troika, or not. Formerly the number of these solemn days was very great, but they are now restricted to a dozen. They give their time according to circumstances, either the half of every day, or the three entire days together, and in harvest time a fortnight or a month, and even two and three; but when the bustle is over, they have the benefit in the same time altogether. Many have the entire winter to themselves, and where they are clever at indoor industrial pursuits, they accumulate money.

After a few years, some of these serfs become so well off that they employ their poor neighbours to work for them, and for the lord of the manor. Indeed, they grow so great that their wives will not carry their own children to church, but make

them over to the grandmother, or any of the old women with white-kerchief-covered heads. Some of these wealthier folks are the possessors of thirty or forty horses, a dozen cows, a flock of sheep, a herd of swine, and other farm-stock in proportion. The dames also are rich in fine clothes, pictures, and images. They have their "jewels" too, heir-looms which have descended through several generations, rows of amber or glass beads, finger-rings, rosaries, small brass chains with a cross attached, or an antique obras or two. In common with nations who enjoy a bright sun and clear atmosphere, the Russian peasant is passionately fond of bright and brilliant colours, to which, under whatever form or combination they present themselves, he applies the term of "flowers." Delicate tints they call "faded flowers." They are very superstitious about colours. If a guest by chance appears at a convivial meeting with a black dress, it is deemed an unlucky omen; if their crops fail, they put away their finery and jewels, and everything of the kind that may have afforded them pleasure, and would not laugh on any account; if the stranger notices this gravity, their reply is. "How can we laugh and look gay, when God's wrath lies heavy upon us?"

The peasant-women at Krasnoë-Celo, often express their surprise that the Barishnæ do not adopt their style of dress.

"Ach, Irene Nicholaiëvna," said one of these wealthy dames to my young friend; "how handsome you would look in the seraphân!" Another having come up to "court" to show herself—having, by means of some contributions from the Barishnæ, just completed her costume,—said in reply to one of them who complimented her on her good looks:—"Why then don't you make yourself as beautiful?"

Considerable etiquette is necessarily observed in their communications, between the family at "court" and the people of the village. This arises from two causes, viz., delicacy and necessity. In the first place, a lady from the manor-house, if she has occasion to visit any of the village population, considers first if they will "like" it, and times her visit so as not to interfere with any of their domestic arrangements. There is none of that *sans cérémonie* invasion of a poor man's cottage by the grandees of his neighbourhood, that one so often sees with regret in old England; none of that lifting the latch and walking unbidden into the very midst of the peasant family, without a word of apology for the intrusion, nor yet that deprecatory look of the disturbed inmates, as they make their "bobs" to the invaders, everyone humbly standing till the census of his age and effects is taken. Were visits of this kind to be thrust on the Russian serf, or peasant,

he would feel himself bound—according to his fraternal notions—to return the visit with the greatest possible dispatch.

Some estates are so isolated, aud at such distances from towns and highways, that the only strangers the serfs of one generation may have ever seen are their seigneur's family, who once in their lifetime may have passed a month or two at their estate. Such are like separate tribes almost, having customs peculiar to their position; yet, strange to say, their language and their *chaussure* are maintained in their original purity, and the religious observances of all are their first and last consideration.

The following anecdote by Poushkin, the Russian poet, may afford a gleam of insight into the character of this interesting class.

A peasant was one day discussing with a friend the merits of their respective priests or papas.

"Oh," said the first speaker, "our's is so learned, he will make you feel what he says; you must come with me, brother, to our church some day, and hear him."

The other, readily acquiescing, accompanied his friend to church. The minister, as usual, was most eloquent, and so impressive was his appeal to the hearts of his hearers that most of them were moved to tears. Observing that his friend the stranger alone remained unmoved, his almost

sobbing *confrère* asked him why he did not weep also.

"Why should I weep, brother?" replied the stranger. "It is not my parish!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Beauty of the Black Earth—Clerical Ploughman—Accomplishments of a Seigneur—Russian Hydropotes and Swimmers—Green-pea Preserving—Cucumber Salting—Milk of Cucumbers—Lightning and its Victims—Fruits and Preserving.

THE estate of Krasnoë-Celo is a small one in comparison with many contiguous to it. The whole landscape, from the horizon all round as far as the eye can reach, is as flat as a pancake, or as the sea in a calm, a patch of dense forest, running like a wedge into it here and there, alone breaking the uniform appearance of this dead level. On this account, however, the property is more valuable, there being no inequalities to impede agricultural operations. The soil is rich, and black as coal-dust, being known in Russia as the "Charnâya-zeum" —black earth—and so soft and easily penetrated, that ploughing it is quite a lady-like process. The

sandalled sage who guides his sheltie of a horse and toy of a plough, are positive parodies upon our heavy clod-hopper and his brace of Flemish Colossi.

In considering this Grecian type of a ploughman, in beard, and tunic, and mien so dignified, and, apparently, above his calling, one can realise a Cincinnatus; but in our loutish stooping bumpkin, with gaping mouth, and heels that never leave the ground, whatever the toes may do, the thing is impossible, though, by the way, we have here a still stronger resemblance to the Roman dictator in the person of Daniel Andrévitch, the rector, who, in addition to his knowledge of Sclavonic and Russ, knows something of French, and converses in Latin. I have seen him more than once guiding his plough and otherwise preparing the ground for its crop of *Gréshniă câsha.** Yet Daniel Andrévitch is a happy man, a rich one, and a good one, too; and far more likely to preach a heartfelt homily on Christian charity than the ill-paid subordinate priests of our church, "passing rich on £40 a-year," with the appearances of £500 to keep up! Daniel Andrévitch has no anxieties of this nature, and therefore he is free to attend

* A species of buck-wheat, containing highly nutritious properties. It requires exceedingly little care in the cultivation, arrives at maturity in a few weeks,—nine—and from the variety of ways in which it may be prepared, would form a valuable adjunct to the British poor man's table.

solely to the good of souls. One may read his calling in his mild blue eyes, in his brow unfurrowed by care, and in the rosy bloom of health on his smooth cheek.

The Count owns a large estate, about thirty-five versts distant from Krasnoë, upon which immense quantities of the finest grain are produced; but this being a compact rich plot upon which to experimentalise, the seigneur prefers superintending the latter himself, and leaves the other property to the care of stewards, so that, at the seat of his own goverment, he looks into everything himself.

At the close of every day, he receives the *Precastchickü*—or overseers of so many peasants—each of whom gives in his account of the labour done by those under him, and which the *seigneur's* clerk enters in a day-book. The Count is seated in his cabinet, while the *Precâst-chikü* stand outside, and the clerk, also outside, rests his weighty volume on the window-ledge and writes as the master dictates.

If the *seigneur* has any cause of complaint, he makes it on such occasions, in a quiet friendly sort of way, using a great deal of Eastern figure in his address. For instance, having to reprove one of these elders of the people for a very childish but very annoying fault, the seigneur, instead of telling him he was old enough to know better, addressed him thus:—

"You know, my friend, that yesterday was not the first time you saw the sun set."

When building is going on, the Count, who is his own architect, is at the same time superintendent of every department. He can tell at a glance, to the hundredth part of an inch almost, if his workmen have got their work awry. This contingency is by no means unusual, and down it all comes, and they go at it again and again, yes, verily, like Robert Bruce's spider, thirteen times, if it is necessary, till finally they succeed.

The Count also superintends—though not so minutely—the more distant property, every new movement or fresh effort emanating from himself alone.

The seigneur of a property is, in short, the Tzar of his *terrain* and people; the internal governing machinery of which bears a strong analogy to the mightier working of the colossal estate of the Imperial ruler.

The seigneur is the physician of his people, not only providing doctors for them, but prescribing for them himself, and in this respect the proprietors have found homœopathy a most invaluable auxiliary. The Count has carefully studied this science for the sake of the people, and such is his skill in cures, that a little crowd of "advice gratis" patients surrounds the door of his cabinet by the time he makes his first appearance every

morning, though petty cases present themselves now as recipients for the minute doses that were never heard of in the days of black draughts and bitter pills, for these peasants are children about such things.

One of the greatest difficulties the seigneur has to encounter, is the outburst of any epidemic among his people. In the last visitation of cholera, for instance, seeing their relatives dead and dying around them, the peasants became bewildered, almost mad—and rushed off to the woods to hide themselves. Many were scarcely able to crawl thither, and, as a matter of course, never returned. Others, who arrived there hale and hearty, brought on the disease by sleeping on the damp ground, and died in great agony. Few lived to revisit their homes, and those who did had to be coaxed out of their hiding-places; thousands died in this manner; in short no stranger can have any idea of the hosts Russia loses in this way.

No people on the face of the round world are such lovers of water as the Russians. This is often very bad, and disease in various forms is induced by the indulgence. Before, during, and after every meal, they drink it in considerable quantities, as well as at frequent intervals throughout the day. This may be one of the causes why the cholera is so virulent in its

ravages on Russians. Nor is this an acquired taste; it is evidently innate, for the peasants carry their love of the element to great lengths. Both sexes are excellent swimmers; I have heard of their diving after and catching fish of large size in their native streams. Every night, as soon as the household of Krasnoë are supposed to be in bed and asleep, the whole of the ornamental water swarms with peasant humanity of all ages and sizes, the majority being girls, having their long hair tied up in red kerchiefs. There they float, and swim, and disport, like so many mermaids, as if water was their native element. Few of them ever touch the bottom, from the time they enter until they leave it. When the apples are ripe, these water-nymphs make frequent excursions across to the orchard, which, being in view of the house, and less guarded from that side, they thus evade the watchers and dogs on the other, standing in considerably more awe of them than of the Count, who often watches these Eves wandering through his preserves in search of the "forbidden fruit," but too far distant to interfere with them, even if he would. He rather enjoys it, however, and laughingly says, "After such a swim for it, they are quite welcome to all they can carry back." This reminds one of the late alms-giving owner of Norbury Park, near Dorking, in Surrey, whose grounds were so

beset with beggars, that he had to call in the aid of the police to keep them off; yet the moment the official's back was turned, he would beckon the distant lurkers to his side, and stealthily smuggle into their hands his £5 notes, entreating them to hide, for fear of the police!

The appearance of the Spansky Moushkii is the commencement of summer's toils, which are trying enough while they last, for in this short warm season, vegetables, fruits, and cereals arrive at maturity in such rapid succession, that hands, however numerous they may be, find ample employment, and still there is work for more.

Among the earliest operations of the season, is the famous green-pea preserving, for peas thus preserved are among the commonest winter dishes. Every spare hand that can be called into requisition, is sent to the pea-fields, for as the peas selected must be all about one size, the gathering is systematic. The old are left for seed, the very young for the next round on the morrow or next day, and the only just mature gathered in the mean time. This pea harvest lasts about ten days, and so busy is every one laying in for the future that the present is entirely forgotten, and it not unfrequently happens that only once or twice at most the family partake of this peculiarly summer vegetable during its season.

Then comes mushroom gathering and drying,

the children of the villagers making long expeditions to the woods, returning home at sunset in groups, singing, laughing, and talking over their exploits, for one has seen a wolf and another a bear.

And now comes salting the winter cucumbers; this is more expeditious in its operation than the pea-gathering, for the cucumbers, which are small, plump, and almost round, after being wiped, are dropped into salt-and-water until the barrel, or other large vessel in which they are kept, is full: fennel, coriander seeds, and several carminative herbs are added; the cucumbers are then put into the ice-cellar for winter supply.

The quantities of cucumbers consumed by all classes in Russia, both in a fresh and salted state, are perfectly incredible. Russians who have met English on the Continent, and seen them eat so sparingly of their favourite, smile and wonder what they are afraid of; but any other cucumbers —especially English ones—after those of Russia, appear unripe and tasteless.

A most refreshing cosmetic, called "milk of cucumbers," is manufactured in great quantities throughout Russia, and is most valuable in allaying the irritation caused by that mortal's enemy, the mosquito; indeed no stranger in Russia should be without it.

This Russian kalydor is procurable in every Gastinoë Dvor.

Now visitations of thunder and lightning startle us with their intensity, for the heavens all round are frequently and brilliantly illuminated with the most magnificent forked lightning. These visitations are only occasionally accompanied by thunder and rain, the latter so impetuous in its downfall that the peasants throw themselves on the ground to escape being pelted down.

Every season, numerous human victims are immolated to the intensity of the lightning, and that not in solitary ones and twos, as with us in Britain occasionally, but in half dozens and dozens.

On a recent occasion, the Count stood at the end of the portico situated at the back front of his house, giving directions to seven women about their manner of weeding, when, the very instant he turned from them to walk into the house, a flash of lightning struck the group to the earth, and every one of the seven was carried home a livid corpse!

The lightning season commenced late this year, and the consequence has been an inroad of blight, most painful to behold, the young leaves of most trees being shrivelled out of form. After its commencement, it suddenly stopped for three days. On the third day, about noon, all nature presented

a curious, indeed almost awful appearance. The air was alarmingly oppressive, a death-like silence reigned around, and the peculiar sickly yellow of the dead sun reminded one of the "Ancient Mariner;" the operations of nature seemed almost suspended, the English flowers lay prostrate, the red roses hung their heads and blanched with the excessive heat; but during the night a perfect tempest of thunder, lightning, and rain purified the blight-laden air, and next morning the dripping trees and flowers looked revived. A balmy breeze played over the earth, and all nature "was herself again."

And now currants, red, and white, and black, and gooseberries, are preserved or pickled—for the Russian housekeepers make beautiful pickles, not hot, but simply sour, of all kinds of fruits, one of the prettiest of which is bunches of red currants. The sweets are super-excellent, and have the greatest care and attention bestowed on their manufacture. A fashion prevails all over Russia of eating preserved fruits entirely alone, or in conjunction with iced water, as the Italians do. At an evening *réunion* in the city, these fruits are generally handed in the course of evening. On making a friendly call in the interior, a variety of sweets are presented; hence the care bestowed on preserves intended for this purpose. Fruits of all kinds, preserved dry, are much used; but the high price of sugar makes preserves costly luxuries, not

within the reach of the million. One of these dry preserves, to which the peasants sometimes treat themselves, is the scarlet berry of the "rowan" tree or mountain ash;* it is an excellent tonic. Besides cultivated fruits, there are wild berries in great abundance, particularly the strawberry, raspberry, blue or blae-berry, brusniki—a species of early cranberry, which, as a preserve, is much used with game—the cranberry, and many others. The Government of Kiev is the head quarters for the finest preserved fruits of all kinds; which are exported in great quantities to Asia and Western Europe. Among these is the famous rose-preserve, made of rose-leaves.

* In the North of Scotland they also preserve this berry.

CHAPTER XIV.

Setting out on a Visit—An Accomplished Tartar—A Morning Call—The Delightful Old Ladies again—A Salutary Law—A Peasant Welcome—Gulls and Sandbanks—The Ferry—Nearly Sailed over by a Bark—The "Chestnut's" Refractory Conduct—Corn, Corn, Everywhere Corn!—Picturesque Reapers—The Village Dog-watchers—Welcome to C———.

We have had Hope, the daughter of Michael, and her bachelor brother, and their niece—who is the belle of the neighbourhood—and the three maiden sisters—the Mesdames de T——, excellent of their sex—all staying at Krasnoë. But the visit of the last-mentioned is just over, and they are driving from the door—but then we shall see them again the day after to-morrow!

The day after to-morrow! How much is to be done on that day! How many birds are to be knocked down with the same stone!

The fact is, that Hope de P—— is resolved

to carry off our large party—the Count and all — to her estate of C——, about thirty versts distant, which she facetiously calls the "sea side," being situated on the banks of the river Zna.

The Count, most wonderful to tell—for he was generally such a fixture at home—accepted the invitation, to the delight of everyone. "The day after to-morrow" having arrived, as early as ten o'clock, a *cortége* of equipages filled the court-yard. First, there was the carriage of Hope, a very light and even elegant *calèche*, all home-made. It was constructed of basket-work, and well lined and cushioned after the ordinary fashion of carriages, the cushions being of blue cloth, made from the raw material by her people, and carefully covered with brown holland, also home made, to preserve the cloth from the dust. Into this, mounted the Countess and Hope Michaëloyna, the vehicle being drawn by three horses abreast.

Next in the procession was a covered *char-à-banc* one of the numerous family of the *tarentasse* genus, capable of accommodating nine persons inside, and drawn by the six bays. Into this climbed the *Barishnæ*—including the belle of the province, Lisé de M———, —accompanied by Hope's brother, who was a visitor for a time with his sister. And then there was the Count's light cabriolet, drawn by his favorite "chestnut," an

Anglo-Russian, in blinkers and heavy English harness, but altogether as *distingué*-looking a turn-out as one of those used by men of fashion in Hyde Park. In this the Count led the way, and, bringing up the rear, came Alexie's apprentice, a young cook, driving a telega, or cart, full of stew-pans,* all imbedded in hay.

Away rushed our steeds with wild impetuosity, —Russia is the land for a fleet drive—but with a beauty of action unsurpassable, the more remarkable from their old Roman mode of being harnessed, the four wheelers abreast, with two leaders in front, the driver reminding one of Ducrow or Batty, as, nearly standing on his box, he gathered his numerous reins in a bunch, and seemed to enjoy their wild speed. In Hyde Park, or the Champs Elysées, how many an admiring gaze would have followed these thorough-bred beauties out of sight, a dead match to a very hair, without spot or blemish, the very perfection of bays, and well worthy the breeder of the fleetest race-horse in the empire.

At the post-house of the village we picked up another of Hope's guests, a Prince W——, a Tartar, and married man with a large family; but neither wife nor child accompanied him, and there he sat, looking most forlorn, the sole occupant of a

* Where the party is large, a cook usually accompanies it.

large machine called a *leen*, before alluded to, and which he had kindly brought, thinking the ladies might prefer it—being an open vehicle—to the *tarentasse*. Out of compliment, therefore, we all took possession of it, and it was arranged that, on reaching a ferry we had to cross, this vehicle should be sent back, and the Prince should occupy a place in our *tarentasse* for the remainder of the journey.

But already we drew near to Mouravè, the abode of the Mesdames de T——, situated a short distance from the high road. Leaving the Countess and Hope Michaëlovna to make the best of their way to the ferry which they had to cross, we entered, by a pair of white wooden gates, upon a gravelled drive that encircled a grass plat, our arrival being announced by the barking of an army of dogs, some of them of immense size, and something like the Newfoundland breed. They were muzzled, and at first, most hostile in their reception; but presently recognising the horses and drivers of their mistresses' friends, their clamour changed in an instant to every expression of canine welcome.

The house of the sisters de T—— was built of brick, stuccoed over, patches of which had fallen off here and there, giving it an appearance of decay, while the white paint of the wood-work was everywhere old and bleached, and resembled lime wash.

The style of architecture was nondescript, being apparently an accumulation of additions rather than one large whole, as if a former proprietor had added a fresh suite of rooms for every member of his family as it arrived in the world. In short, it had a very English air about it, and reminded me of some old haunted manor-house with a mysterious legend attached to it, which the traveller is sure to encounter on the outskirts of most retired villages in England. Its small narrow windows, and the long rank grass of the plat, or lawn, added to this feeling, and so fully was I impressed with the idea that it was forsaken and tenantless, that I almost regarded as a spectre the appearance of an old, grey-headed, wrinkled serving-man in plain black suit, and white cravat.

He glided silently out from a side door, and bowing, passed along the front of the house, leading the way to the entrance, situated at the top of a flight of stone steps, over which hung a massive portico.

From these antique externals, one was quite prepared for the antique within. Following the old man through a vestibule, the oak flooring of which shone like a mirror, he introduced us to an apartment at the further end of it, large, lofty, and garnished with oval mirrors and long-backed chairs, the seats of which were covered with handsome, but faded, tapestry, massive mahogany tables, with old-

fashioned round feet, and almost as dark as ebony from rubbing and age, and all bearing so high a polish that floor, and chair-backs, and table-legs reflected every movement twenty times told. Several family portraits in oval frames hung round the room, representing ladies in powdered hair and short waists, and all bearing a strong family likeness, in three of which, though young and pretty Hebe-looking girls of fifteen, it was easy to trace the features of the three excellent sisters.

A large church-like window, in three divisions, and down to the floor, stood wide open, leading out upon a balcony which overlooked an extensive arrangement of flower-beds, broad walks, and diamond, crescent, and heart-shaped plats of tall rank grass, beyond which, thick trees hemmed in the view on all sides, except just opposite, whence a long broad avenue of elms stretched out among corn-fields, affording in the distant perspective the glimpse of a forest and blue sky.

On a rustic bench in this shaded *allée*, sat two of the three sisters, both dressed alike, as usual; one was embroidering, the other filling a little basket with apricots, which she selected from a pile in a dish beside her, while the third, similarly dressed, and scissors in hand, was busily adding to an already large bouquet of flowers.

To descend and join them was the act of a moment. We were received with open arms, and

the Russian greeting, viz., two kisses on one cheek, and one on the other. Chairs were brought, and we formed a large and merry circle in that grave old *allée*, which, however, often resounded with the voice of youth and mirth, for the sisters were the very happiest of old ladies, and this was the favourite resort of the young of every family for forty versts round.

These ladies were born on this spot, which had been their mother's dower, for she also first saw the light in this same mansion. The change of the seasons; of day and night; of sunshine and shower; with an occasional visit to Tambov or Moscow, or to one of their many neighbours, had been the only incidents to break the even tenor of their simple lives, from one year's end to the other. But those troubles inherent to our race, and the most deeply poignant punishment for sin that flesh is heir to, viz., the departure hence, *for ever*, of those we love best on earth, overtook them in the midst of their serenity, and father, mother, and a cherished sister dropped off in rapid succession. They had barely recovered from this shock, when their last surviving relation, a sole protector, their mother's brother, who had lived with them since their bereavement, died suddenly, leaving them for a time inconsolable. Our good Count—whom they believe to be the very best man alive, or that ever lived—does his

best to lighten their cares by his valuable advice, and puts them in the way of managing their little property with admirable ability.

"And now," said the youngest of the trio, who related to me these sad events as we walked up and down among the tall* grass, leaving lengthy wakes of our progress behind us, "we are strong enough to say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord,'" meekly crossing herself as she uttered these words, and bowing reverently.

Here we were summoned to join the others, and to partake of fresh and preserved fruits, which two men busily deposited on the rustic table. Of every dish that appeared we were compelled to taste; now it was a peach of a rare kind, called "Katinka," or Catherine, and of Persian stock; and now fresh white currants of enormous size, the descendants of a tribe grown in the Levant; and now a slice of "annanav," or pine-apple of superior quality; then an apricot, and so on until the Count began to fidget, thinking the patience of his horses had been sufficiently tried, when we rose to take leave, each one laden with

* In the interior they have no idea of close-cropped lawns; every residence has grass plats, and most of the paths through extensive gardens are of grass; but they are seldom cut until they have run to hay, and thus give to gardens, otherwise the most luxuriant and well kept, the appearance of untidiness and neglect.

some *souvenir* of these kind old ladies, the basket of apricots and the tremendous bouquet among the rest.

But the Count had a project in his head. Having regained the high-road, we galloped along it for several versts, when our leader drove through a hay-field towards a populous village, picturesquely scattered round a handsome stone church, with burnished dome and cupolas. This was the estate of a very intimate friend of the Count's, who had been ordered off suddenly to drink the waters of Nassau, and the Count watched over his interests in his absence.

There exists in Russia a very excellent law, and one which is most stringently enforced, and that is, that every landed proprietor must always have in store corn sufficient for the consumption of every serf on his estate during the space of a year. This is in case of famine, which is by no means unusual, the crops being, in divers stages, subject to so many destructive agents, the principal of which is a grub, which generally attacks the young plant in the spring, and is most sweeping in its locust-like mode of operation.

Just before the ingathering of harvest every year, an official appointed by the Crown—generally a local don, who can be fully depended upon—visits every estate within a certain district, to see that the regulation is attended to. This official

was now making his round of visits, and the Count wished to see that all was ready for him.

We drove straight towards the church, which was situated in the centre of a spacious place, or square, round which clustered comfortable-looking log-huts, a most agreeable change from the Indian file-like arrangement usual, for these were scattered about as if they had rained from the clouds. In this place was also the public granary, to which the Count led the way, and to which the inhabitants of the immediate neighbourhood came from all sides to offer welcome to their master's friend, and the "German" ladies who accompanied him. Many a bright eye twinkled as they approached, and soft peachy cheeks showed their dimples, and parting lips rows of such white even teeth! They formed a picturesque crowd, which talked and laughed, and enjoyed itself, and with which the "German ladies" talked for some time, departing amid the bows and smiles, "good byes" and "come soon back again" exclamations, of as happy and contented a set of smiling faces as ever the sun illuminated in any part of the world.

Away we sped, with all the prestige of an invading army, surrounded by clouds of dust, through which the imposing tramp of our numerous cavalry resounded afar off. Our road to the river-side lay through an ocean of rich grain which covered all space, rendering it

somewhat inexplicable to the comprehension of the stranger how such regions had been sown, and whence would come the legions necessary to reap such vast and mighty expanses. Every step of our way lay through an El-dorado of harvest wealth; Mother Earth was everywhere encrusted with the yellow gold of her teeming bounties. Near, and afar off, the black-green forests, circumscribed by the yellow outline, afforded a not inapt illustration, on a gigantic scale, of their own holy images. These forests were the visible flesh parts, without which the incrustations of gold would have had no national character. They are the national features, and as such, create a curiosity in the stranger's mind, at which the Russian smiles when he remarks it.

The air, from the hazy red of mid-day, suddenly changes to greenish blue, and the temperature, from something like tropical heat, becomes as suddenly cold. The airily-dressed occupants of the open vehicle begin to shiver and draw closer around them their fluttering rags of gauze and tulle; but, no longer able to endure the cold, the cavalcade stops, and a store of warm wraps are ferreted out from the depths of the *tarentasse;* wadded cloaks and Scotch plaids are indiscriminately posed upon their shoulders; and again we move on, presently beholding the mighty geni who has thus surprised us with a

taste of mid-winter on a sunny summer's day. There, full thirty feet beneath us, rolls the cold and purple Zna, whose current, "deep and strong," sweeps round innumerable sand-banks, which intersect it in various places, and rising several feet above it, are frequented by hundreds of gulls, of the Kittiwake genus, some of which were posed upon one leg, with their heads under their wings, while others flew overhead, uttering wild melancholy screams, giving a peculiarly sea-side effect to the scene; also farther enhanced by the appearance of several barks, corn-laden, sweeping onwards with the speed of steam-power, by the force of the current alone, making one quake for the safety of the frail punt-like arrangement which served as a ferry-boat, and upon which a couple of carts, laden with hay, were creeping across the stream towards us, being propelled by a hand-over-hand process, an old woman clutching at a rope which, fastened to a tottering post on each side of the river, formed their only stay. On the passage of a bark, this rope is depressed in the water, and the immense craft passes over it.

The ferry presented a most animated scene, an illustration of which would have well repaid the pencil of Horace Vernet or Orloffsky.

On both banks of the river was an assemblage of men, women, horses, and dogs; some stood in

groups, waiting their turn to cross, others, having just landed, pursued their different routes in all directions, the elevation on the opposite side enabling us to trace them for miles away; among these we discovered the *calèche* of Hope de P—— floating, as it seemed, through the corn.

Descending by a steep and well-worn road to the river side, the party alighted. The punt had by this time arrived, and already the carts it had ferried over were slowly moving off. The great *tarentasse*, with its six horses, is now shipped and set off, its late occupants watching from the little wooden wharf its snail-like progress and the surprised looks of the boys.

And now came our turn; the cabriolet, with the proud and dainty chestnut, was led to the centre; next, a peasant's cart, full of peasant lasses, and several led horses—for they had arrived before us, and each keeps to its turn—and then all the Barishnæ and the gentlemen, standing, as best they could, upon cross planks, so arranged as to keep all out of the water which filled the bottom of the punt. Seven pairs of stout peasant hands laid hold of the rope, and we are already near the middle of the stream.

"Make way," cried the Count, for another bark was approaching with formidable speed, her great round swan-like bows—singularly scooped out like

a spoon, and constructed with more attention to floating than sailing,—already overshadowed us. It appeared impossible to escape her unscathed, and only by the greatest efforts of a few strong and well-measured pulls, directed by the intelligent Count, were we jerked out of harm's way.

I could not divest myself of the idea of a raft-load of shipwrecked mariners, having caught hold of a rope sent by a Manby's rocket, to which we all clung with the tenacity of a last hope.

Having at length reached the opposite shore all *sain-et sauf*, the bustle of debarcation commences, "Dourack," and "Pagann," and Svenia," fool, and pagan, and pig, were reiterated by the men to their horses, and by the masters to the men with thundering emphasis, for the irrational animals, very unlike their rational neighbours, were most unwilling to take leave of the punt. After much ado, they are all got out but the "chestnut," whom nothing could induce to move one inch in advance, though he persisted meanwhile in a *chassez croisez* of his own, and a *battement*, as noisy as ungraceful, accompanied by a most decided shake of the head and snorting that plainly told his feelings. A splendid high-bred noble of old English pedigree, blinkered, like his ancestors, over the eyes, and considerably beyond them, he

had not been permitted the same privilege of looking into things for himself as that enjoyed by his Russian comrades, and in consequence doubtless deemed matters much worse than they were. "Dourack," and "Pagann," and "Svenia" were alike unavailing, he still shook his head; but the gentle tap on his beautiful neck, and the soft "moë drook,"—"my friend,"—of his master, were irresistible, and he followed him on shore like a lamb.

Betaking ourselves to the *tarentasse*, we bade a short adieu to the river, and passing through a Tartar village on its banks, followed in the route of the Countess and her friend, "over the hills and far away" through the corn-fields.

The incidents, tragic and comic, of our recent adventure provided a prolific theme for discussion among the occupants of our vehicle, now increased by the addition of the Prince W——, a most accomplished "ladies' man," whose quaint remarks and bon-mots kept the party in the highest state of merriment the whole way.

What a glorious landscape lay around! Corn, corn, everywhere corn; villages and forests, and carts and carriages, and people, at a little distance, seemed to be wading and floating in corn; the roads and tracts were positively lost in corn, leaving us barely the width of our equipage, while the outside horses trod down the rich

yellow grain beneath their hoofs, filling their mouths as they sped along.

Having gained the summit of the acclivity, a shallow valley presented itself, and again a gentle rise beyond, bounded in the distance by forest. But the foreground is a charming picture. Groups of young and blooming peasant women, brilliant in their red head-dresses and long white pinafores, striped with many bright rows of gay colour, are busily cutting the graceful prosa, or rye, with a neat small sickle, while numbers of men, at no great distance, mow down the heavy-headed oats with neat cradle scythes, almost light enough for a woman or child to wield with ease. Women followed each, binding up in very small sheaves, which they set on end, two or three together, arranging them like plumes of feathers, with the curving heads drooping outwards.

Our route now lay through several villages, which appeared to be inhabited only by dogs; numbers surrounded the carriages, barking vociferously, to the great annoyance of the horses, who looked down upon them with the utmost contempt, snorting their disgust at such un-Russian-like greeting, while others protruded their noses from beneath closed doors, and out at various holes, joining in chorus from within; and not a few, imprisoned in the cattle-yards, added the bass of their deeper bay to the universal clamour. The

faithful creatures were, however, only fulfilling their trust, for many of them, like the almost human Gelert, of Llewellyn notoriety, were left to protect the sleeping infant during the absence of its parents in the field, or the sick and bed-ridden. How faithfully these devoted friends of man discharge the sacred trust reposed in them is only known to these simple folk whom they serve, and by whom they are gratefully appreciated; for many a tale of hair-breadth escape from prowling wolf and even bears, scared or slain by these ever-watchful guardians, may be gleaned from the peasants. Daily, during the harvest time, entire villages are left to the care of the dogs, the only human inhabitants being the aged and infants. Some of these dogs are of large size, but the generality are about the size of a full-grown Pomeranian dog, which they resemble in form, but in colour that of the wolf.

And lo! an equipage, with six horses, is suddenly discovered half-a-mile behind us, and following with the utmost speed; after an attentive survey, all pronounced it to be the droshkii, or leen, of Peter Petrovitch. By some misunderstanding, its driver had crossed the ferry, instead of returning home, as ordered; but in a country like this, where the stables seem to undergo the same power of distension as the Gospodinsky Dom, and on the shortest possible notice are ready

to receive an army of guests, this addition was not deemed worthy a consideration, though more than once I wondered what sort of an establishment this of Hope de P——'s could be for a single lady, to accommodate our veritable regiment of cavalry.

The arrival of the leen, therefore, served us with a pleasing variety, and, always glad of an opportunity to handle the reins, Peter Petrovitch proposed an immediate removal from the shut-up *tarentasse* to his droshkii. Nothing loath, the exchange was made in a moment; and our new driver, mounting the box, whirled us off over a succession of miniature hills and valleys; down a short steep; splashed across the almost dry bed of a river; climbed the corresponding steep on the opposite shore; dashed through a herd of animals resembling wild boars upon stilts, and with hedges of bristles on their backs; through a small straggling village; and finally down an avenue, pulling up at the door of a wooden house, which, almost buried among the trees, was scarcely visible ere we were under its eaves.

From a sunny window, embowered in creeping plants, and situated just over the front entrance, the smiling faces of Hope and the Countess shone down upon us, and the next moment the hospitable mistress of C—— was at the door, and saluted us with a truly Russian welcome.

CHAPTER XV.

The Home of Hope de P——, — Tartar Neighbours—Transparent Apples—Bee Garden—Accommodation for Guests —A Midnight Adventure—Martha—A Russian Ablution—Bishop Sleeves—Delightful Reading-Parties—Difference in the Length of the Day in the North and in the South—Mr. Cobden's Visit to Russia.

THE establishment of Hope de P—— is on a different scale to that of Krasnoë, and more in keeping with the number of her people, which is under a hundred "souls." But it is a compact, rich—for its size—and picturesquely-situated little property, and though bounded on all sides by Tartar neighbours, which, to a Western European, might be deemed a very horrible position for a lone lady, is rather a subject of felicitation, for most of them are educated and refined men, with accomplished wives and fami-

lies, among whom Hope Michaëlovna has found many acquaintances and sincere friends.

The house of our hostess is a plain and substantial wooden one, not unlike a good-sized, old-fashioned English farm-house, with two windows on each side of the door, and five above, and having several off-shoots to the right, like covered ways —connecting links between the house and a range of smaller buildings at some distance. A garden surrounds the house, that in front being railed in to keep stray fowls, and hogs, and sheep, and such like, at a respectful distance. Straight as an arrow, through this runs a gravel walk, which conducts to an ever-open door. Enter, and cheerful apartments are on all sides of a small vestibule, through the open doors and windows of which one catches glimpses of trees, laden with fruit, in the garden behind, while, still beyond, corn-fields and the far distant woods fill up the back-ground. Step out at one of these window-doors and you are in a veritable Aladdin's garden. Pink-checked apples depend side by side with the transparent fruit of the same tribe, whose seeds are distinctly visible as they hang like so many yellow glass-balls*

* By some, this transparent apple is called the "Moscow Pippin." Some years since, a young tree, and some of the fruit, were carried to England as a curiosity. Indeed, it is regarded in the same light here, being too insipid to eat. It is

from the green branches, while cherries, green-gages, and egg-plums grow in profusion around, forming an umbrageous orchard, intersected by numerous walks, and latticed bowers, and beds of flowers round which the bees hummed merrily. Away stretches this pretty retreat, down a gentle slope, towards the smooth sandy bed of the almost dry river before mentioned, along the banks of which a broad path conducts to what the inhabitants of C—— call their "sea-side," being no other than our old friend, the river Zna, again, whose course runs past the mouth of this dry river, and at right angles with the house, which is posed on the brow of an elevation, just at a safe distance from this beautiful object. In its calm and tranquil moods, the Zna is a deep flowing, silent, sentimental beauty; but in its swollen, storming outbursts, before the setting in of winter, and again on the melting of the snows in the spring, it is a raging vixen, rather to be feared than trusted. On the opposite side of this river, a vast prairie stretches for miles along its banks, the home of myriads of snipes, and covered with wild flowers

supposed to be a native of Asia Minor, and that it is the original fruit

"Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden."

If so, one might truly sympathise with Eve, for a more tempting *looking* fruit never dangled from a bough.

and long grass. Beyond rises a dry, heathery region, interspersed with rich brown patches of newly-reclaimed land, and which abounds with game of several kinds. With this exception, not a vestige of animal life, not a single hut, is perceptible as far as the eye can reach; and but for the occasional report of a gun—probably young de P——'s, who is a devoted sportsman—and the low flights of game birds, it seems a region uninhabited by living thing. But on the village side, the landscape is broken into detail and more picturesque. For a mile or so, the river runs along the base of high cliffs. These are overhung by shrubs, and wild creeping plants, which, depending in graceful festoons, or straggling in disorderly elegance down the face of the yellow sand-stone of the cliff, have the prettiest effect. Here and there, at the base of these cliffs, a narrow beach of yellow sand and shingle carries out the agreeable illusion of the sea-side, which is still more heightened by the appearance of numerous rugged and winding pathways, worn out of the soft, loamy clay sand, and shingle, of which the cliffs are composed, affording to the more sure-footed among the villagers—whose cottages are posed on the very top of the heights—a near, but dangerous pathway to the river side. The mouth of the dry river, which is a broad zig-zag of fine smooth sand, covered a few inches deep with water,

runs into the Zna, and thus terminates the cliffs, on that side, in a formidable jagged rock, standing out like a headland on the sea-coast. Round this is a small bay, where rides at anchor the village fishing-boat, a large clumsy coble, most appropriately covered with fish-scales, while a fisherman's net lay stretched upon the beach to dry, lending a finishing touch to the features of a sea-side *locale.*

Retracing our steps towards the house along the serpentine shores of the dry river, we ascend its steep banks by means of steps cut in the turf, then through a brake, and we stumble unexpectedly into the "bee-garden." This communicates with the flower and fruit-garden at the back of the house; here are ranged in a semi-circle a dozen bee-hives—not the little straw dwellings that our English bees are accustomed to, but houses formed of the hollow trunks of trees stripped of their bark and set upon posts about a foot from the ground. This assemblage of droll-looking erections, several of them considerably out of the perpendicular, conveyed at first glance the idea of a Turkish cemetery, but that, instead of each monumental pillar being surmounted by a turban, it was finished off with a conical roof, overhanging the sides by several inches.

At a convenient distance from the dwelling-house is situated a great square farm-yard, pre-

cisely on the plan of those attached to the cottages of the peasants, but larger. Here horses, cows, hogs, fowls, sheep, pigs, and divers other animals are located. In sundry erections, resembling a detached wing of the house, are the kitchen, dairy, laundry, storehouse, lace-factory, carpet-room, dye-houses, &c.; and in a small open shed on the village high road, but close to the house, a pair of scales, large enough to weigh a whole hog or sheep, is there *pro bono publico*.

Beyond the farm-yard lies a portion of the land belonging to the people, presenting a mosaic of corn, cucumbers, onions, herbs of different kinds, cabbages, kail, &c., and, still beyond, stretch "seas" of different cereals, to the usual boundary of forest or wood.

Such is the variegated little territory of Hope de P——, who, with Robinson Crusoe, may truly say "I am monarch of all I survey."

And now let us return to the sunny old domicile. In every establishment, whether large or small, be it in town or country, there are three apartments which are indispensable with every respectable family. These are the dining-room, drawing-room, and *salon* or dancing-room; and in the selection of a house, or *appartement*, they are always the first consideration. They are spacious, generally elegant in decoration, and even in out-of-the-way localities in the interior, are well, and often sumptu-

ously, furnished. Cabinets and boudoirs are endless, and as to bed-rooms in the establishments of the interior, where space is no object and a room more or less incurs no extra expense—except for furnishing—bed-chambers are to be found as exclusively private, as an apartment of the same kind in England, that is, where the number of visitors is within due bounds. It is chiefly in cities where rents are high, and an imposing appearance necessary, often on limited means, that demi-bed-rooms are so common, simply by way of economy; for as every lady must have her boudoir, and every gentleman his cabinet, these two extra rooms in the city would increase the rent considerably, and as monsieur cannot possibly do without his *cabinet d'affaires*, there is no alternative but for madame to yield up her boudoir and make a compromise with her bed-room, thus embodying the two wants into one. In the country every room but the best public ones, is provided with ample sofas, or, as they are called, divans and *canapés*, and by the addition to these of a pair of sheets and a neat portable washing apparatus, is converted into a bed-room in a second. In some apartments a continuous divan runs all round the room, thus providing sleeping accommodation for several in one, for it not unfrequently happens, after a ball at one of these isolated residences in the interior, when guests come thirty, forty, fifty, and even sixty

versts to an entertainment, that they much prefer even an indifferent bed to the fatigue of returning home after dancing until five or six in the morning. On such occasions the whole party sleep at their entertainer's house, breakfast there, of course, dine perhaps, and not unfrequently have a second ball and a second night of it at the same place, deferring their departure until the close of the third day. I have known it thus, where all parties seemed just as keen for a third addition of these convivialities, as they were for the first.

In small establishments, however, where such provisions are not always practicable, and where, after every available divan, and *canapé*, and mattress are likely to be occupied, and there is still a preponderance of guests unprovided with sleeping-room—why, then, there is still the old-fashioned resource, viz., a bed of hay, a veritable "shake-down," which is bountifully scattered all over the apartment, and upon which thick linen sheets are spread, with plenty of down cushions.

But at C—— our party was comparatively a small one, and therefore each was provided with a little chamber apart. The one I occupied was a pleasant bower, with a French window to the ground, through which peeped the morning sun and a host of gay flowers; the bed, a morocco-covered sofa, soft and springy, and cool, with numerous pillows of down, over the whole of which were spread a pair

of snow-white sheets, odoriferous with violet and orange flower.*

To sleep, however, even in such a retreat, was not so easy, for the mosquitoes, with their peculiar "ping," kept one continually on the *qui vive.* If these torments were bad at Krasnoë, they were a thousand times worse here, being so near the water; therefore, nothing remained for it but an active attack on the enemy, driving out and slaying without mercy, giving quarter to none. Scarcely had I hunted out the last intruder, and drawn down the window-blind to exclude the last faint glimmer of twilight, when my ears were assailed by a sound quite new to them, and which for some time remained perplexingly inexplicable. "Râck tacky tacky, râck tacky tacky," rose mysteriously on the surrounding silence, leaving it for some time dubious whether it was actually at a distance or in my very apartment. Could it be a new genus of the little insect known to the vulgar by the name of the death-watch? † In vain I tried to explain it away, but it grew louder and louder; it approached nearer and nearer, "Râck tacky tacky, râck tacky tacky," unmusical,

* The root of the scented violet, and the dried petals of the orange plant, which every family rears under glass, are much used by careful housewifes for scenting linen.

† This little spider is very common in Russia. Visiting English friends near Petersburg one summer, the room I occu-

monotonous, and almost appalling. It was even now at my very window, and, unable any longer to endure the suspense, I turned the handle of my window-door, and looked forth into the darkness.

"What is that?" I enquired, as some dark object, with muffled feet, glided like a shadow past me. The râck tacky tacky ceased. I had discovered the monster then. Was it the bell-wether of the flock, or the bull with the bell, or the master spirit of the night amusing himself?

"It is I, Matvè, Matvè Andrèvitch, Barishna," said a soft voice I knew. It was the house watchman! Poor simple Matvè, with whom I had made acquaintance that very afternoon, having helped him to mend his net, for he was the village fisherman, and he had shown me in return how to make a wonderful knot. Little did he imagine how he had scared his new acquaintance. The extraordinary instrument upon which he played, and which was a substitute for a triangle, was a piece of solid deal board, about the size of a large slate, with a string run through a hole, by which to carry it, and upon the face of this he rattled

pied, being one in a very old wooden house, had been covered with paper to modernise it. But so many thousands of these insects had found a home in the wood underneath it, that, during the whole of the night, the noise they made resembled a continued smart shower of rain, the characteristic "tick tick" being lost in the confusion of so many little hammers at work.

with a stick, to keep off marauders in the shape of wolves or thieves.

To sleep, however, was out of the question until sunrise, when Matvè's noise ceased, and I seemed to have slumbered but for an instant, when it appeared to me, as if in a dream, that I was rudely shaken by the shoulder and ordered to get up. On awakening, however, I found that the shaking was no dreamy imagining, but a reality, recognising in my assailant the person of Martha, the vice-mistress of C——, the maid in reality, the friend in sincerity and fidelity, of Hope Michaëlovna, an exceedingly rough diamond, but a rarely precious one.

Martha was the very antipodes to a London lady's maid, or even to one of St. Petersburg, either of whom would have stood aghast at her *sans cérémonie* style of awakening a sleeper, or at her imposing presence, as she stood before me, with a large brass basin resting on one of her capacious sides, and a jug to match on the other. For a moment I felt certain that she had mistaken my room for that of one of the gentlemen, having somehow connected brass basins with barber's work. She soon undeceived me, however, and persisted that I was to rise and proceed with my ablutionary *devoirs*. In vain I protested against her interference, stoutly maintaining my own ability to serve myself; but as Martha considered

her mistress a child in her hands, she probably regarded the stranger—who had been especially recommended to her care—in the same light, and finding that I got the worst of the contention, I "made a virtue of necessity," and yielded with a good grace, keeping a careful look-out on all her proceedings.

Pouring into the brass basin a drop of water scarcely sufficient to cover a piece of superlative home-made soap* which she had brought in the bottom of it, and which I had scarcely applied to my face, when, lo! sluice came the contents of the brass jug, in an icy cold stream, all over head and ears, the unexpected shock depriving me for a moment of respiration. On looking round to remonstrate, Martha had fled, but instantly returned with a second jug full, which in all kindness was meant for my benefit also. This time I was on my guard, and, much to her chagrin, I poured its contents into the basin and proceeded with my ablutions in my own way.

"But that is not well," she exclaimed, on

* The Russians are famous for their manufacture of soaps. Kazan in particular boasts of a peculiarity of this kind for shaving, which is highly prized on the Continent. Other places in Russia are remarkable for soap made of the yolks of eggs, which is very agreeable. Honey soap is also common; and in establishments where the mistress takes an active interest, very pleasant soap is made of almonds, like that known in England as "Lady Derby's."

watching my proceedings. "Hope Michaëlovna has the better plan, for she has half-a-dozen jug-fuls over her head every morning." *

What a splendid "gude wife" for a thriving farmer this handsome portly dame would have made, with her double chin, and rosy cheeks, and bright blue eyes, and glossy streak of fair hair parted across her broad white brow; her head dress, a gay colored kerchief; her cotton robe *à la* demi-train, with full bishop sleeves,† her apron stiffly starched, a little cotton kerchief round her ample shoulders; and to complete all, from the just visible tips of her ears depended a pair of amethyst drops, full two inches long. Truly she looked like an Eastern Queen in the majesty of her presence. And yet Martha was but a serf!

"And now, dear, coffee is on the table," said the good *matoushka,* popping her handsome face in at my open window. In Russia, breakfast, accor-

* All Russians, of whatever grade, have the greatest abhorrence of dipping into soapy water, or applying the same water twice in succession to face or hands. After using soap it is washed off with pure water, poured on from another vessel. Thence the predilection of the lower orders for washing in running streams.

† "Bishop" sleeves are the favourite fashion with this class of maidens, although the all-prevailing tight—the mode of Western Europe—are occasionally worn, but then only as an expediency, for want of stuff. It was a common remark at Krasnoë-Celo whenever any of the Petersburg party were seen by the peasants:—"Ah, what a pity it is that they had not material enough to make them full sleeves!"

ing to our meaning, is merely a simple refreshment of coffee and rusks, served between nine and ten o'clock. Their breakfast—"dejeuner," "frühstück," "zaftrack"—is equivalent to our luncheon, and consists generally of light meat dishes and sweets.

At coffee, as a general rule, few members of a family meet; they either have it served in a sleeping apartment, or, in too *degagé* a dishabille to confront each other, drop into the dining-room one after the other. In one Russian family, however, that I know—where there are several pretty daughters—every member of it sits down to coffee dressed for the day, and the satisfaction expressed by divers visitors and relatives* of the rougher sex, plainly shows how highly this wholesome practice would be appreciated, were it general.

Our simple repast ended, the party dispersed. The brother of Hope, and several sprigs of the

* During the previous winter, a country cousin of this family visited the northern capital, where they resided. He spent several months there, and during that time it was remarked that he rarely accepted invitations to dinner, but often begged to be permitted to take coffee with the family party in the morning. On inquiring the reason of this unusual proceeding, he replied that the novelty of sitting down to coffee at nine o'clock in the morning, with ladies neatly dressed, and having blooming cheeks and shining *chevelure*, was a charm he had never before known, and which would serve as one of his most agreeable reminiscences of his visit to St. Petersburg.

neighbouring nobility who were staying in the house, set off to shoot game, which abounds in immense quantities at the very door. No certificates are required here, no vexatious game laws are in force; one may kill or snare any denizen of the woods, from a bear to a tomtit, without paying a copeck for the privilege. In short, so plentiful is game of the choicest kinds, that the peasant deems it of little value, and prefers his veal and beef instead. Partridges, grouse, ptarmigan, black-cock, snipes, quails, and a great variety of other birds, abound in myriads. Our friends took a peasant and a cart with them, and returned in a couple of hours with it almost full of game.

Meanwhile the Barishnæ saunter in the garden, eating fruit, or helping — or hindering — Martha with her preserves, which she makes on a charcoal fire, in a tripod, in the garden; while others of them cut flowers to replenish the vases and *corbeilles*. This is an important duty in every house, the ladies taking it week about, vying with each other in the taste of these floral arrangements. The flower garden is also under their surveillance. Few Russian ladies, however, are practical gardeners; they delight in flowers, but trouble themselves very little about the culture of them.

At luncheon, all meet again, and amuse each other by a relation of the adventures of the fore-

noon, after which all betake themselves to other pastimes. M. W——, the Tartar, who is an inimitable reader in various languages, is chosen by common acclamation to read aloud; while Hope's brother copies engravings, and his own pencil sketches, most superlatively in pen and ink. Most of the others are seated round, some embroidering, knitting, sewing, or engaged in crochet work. These pleasant *réunions* take place in a large latticed bower, near a group of "forbidden fruit" trees. Truly nothing of the kind can be more delightful than thus passing the scorching hours under the shade of a grove like this, with the blue river gleaming through the quivering leaves of trees borne down with rosy fruit, while birds sing among their branches.

In Russia, in the interior especially, this out-of-door existence, these summer pleasures, are appreciated to the fullest extent. No people luxuriate more in the fresh open air. They eat and drink in it; they often sleep in it; in short, the whole summer through they live in it.

At three o'clock the party again meet at a sumptuous dinner, all of home produce. The bill of fare on the first day, for instance, was spring soup and minced meat patties; a splendid sterlit, caught an hour before; a pillau of fowls, a couple of fine tongues, a brace of grouse, ditto of partridges, cauliflower with sweet-sauce, roast veal,

green peas, haricots, &c.; jelly of home-made isinglass, cream and water ices, and sweets without end; dessert of fresh fruits served in the garden, wines of different kinds, including champagne, as usual. After dinner, coffee and bonbons; and after dessert, cards and music, and again out of doors until nine o'clock, when the heavy dews remind one that the sun is low, and all hurry in to tea. The difference between the hour of sunset at St. Petersburg and at Moscow, is as marked as that between London and the North of Scotland. At midsummer, in St. Petersburg, the sun rises *apparently* but a few yards from the spot where he set; consequently, for several weeks it is never dark; but at Moscow, during the same time, they have several hours of darkness.

As if our party was not sufficiently large in itself, visitors from a distance dropped in, chiefly gentlemen, whose conversation turned upon Mr. Cobden's visit to Russia. They so much regretted that he had come and gone, and passed through Moscow at their very "threshold,"—though three hundred versts off,—before they were aware that he had been in the country, or they should certainly have given him a dinner at Moscow. This courtesy appeared to be evoked by the fact that he was a British senator, for several who were loudest in their expression of regret at

his fleeting visit,* did not even know what course of politics he advocated. Sir Robert Peel, and free trade and the corn laws, were also discussed; and even the merits and demerits of our mighty Jove, the "Times;" and curious indeed it seemed, at that great distance from his seat of power, to hear the lucid critiques of these astute foreigners. More than one of those present were first-rate English scholars and travellers, and had made their first acquaintance with the British "Thunderer" on his own domain. With his politics, or British politics, they never could or would agree; but they admired the talent of his *résumés* on social, scientific, and literary questions, and pronounced his "leaders" on such subjects to be the most perfect literary compositions. One of these gentlemen had made a collection of them for years, had had them indexed and bound, and used them as standard works of reference.

* It was during this visit to Russia, that Mr. Cobden was introduced to the depot for tracts published in every language spoken throughout the Russian domains. It is situated at the back of the Kazan Cathedral, in St. Petersburg. Doubtless our senator was somewhat surprised to find an institution on "free trade" principles in the very heart of the Northern Capital, and established more than thirty years ago, in the reign of Alexander I.

CHAPTER XVI.

Anglo-Russian Pigs—Sanitary Reform in the Sty—Bristles and Lard—Russian Hogs—Poultry—Farming—Modern Dairy at Lîgova—Mr. McLothlin of Lîgova—Butter—Improvidence of Proprietors—Farmers wanted—Irish Plan well adapted to Russia.

"HAVE you seen Hope's English pigs?" said Paul Michaëlovitch to me, as we rose from coffee one morning.

"No, indeed, I have never even heard of them," I replied.

"But will you care to see them?" he added, smilingly—"for their residence is not the most immaculate place for a lady to visit."

Assuring him that being so near compatriots—and cockneys, too—I could not do otherwise than call on them, we therefore set off towards the farm-yard. There, in open sties—much the same as those used in England—but considerably larger—were

a trio of what had once been fine—I think—"Chinese pigs," each with a "knowing" little curl in his tail. They were dirty beyond description, and up to their knees in a slough of mire, their once plump sides dangling like empty pockets, as they moved actively about.

My companion seemed disappointed that I did not admire what, by all the country round, was deemed the very *beau ideal* of pig kind. He stared when I told him that well-bred pigs in England had their houses regularly washed down with water every day, and that, there, they were fed principally upon milk. Moreover, that pigs, as a body, were much scandalized, for naturally, they were neither the gross-living nor gross-feeding creatures they were generally supposed to be.

I verily believe the trio understood every word of the panegyric, for they stood perfectly still, listening, and regarding us attentively with their almost human expression of eye, every now and then giving an assenting grunt. Hope's brother determined to try this new plan with his sister's pigs—viz., to keep them clean and dry, and to give them plenty of good "wash," a *recipe* for collecting which, I left with Martha, whose special pets they were, for she said, "They had more sense than the Russian pigs." I even hinted the necessity of giving the poor beasts a good scrub

with soap and water, by way of completing the sanitary reform proposed in their department, at which my companion indulged in such a fit of laughter that the farm-yard rang again.

Hogs are chiefly bred here for their bristles, and pigs for their fat. The former are well known in England, but it may not be so well known there, that the lard which in that country enters so largely into the composition of pastry, butter, &c., is in Russia burnt as oil, being used in kitchen, corridor, and ante-room lamps, and affords a clean, clear, and strong light. The Russian hogs and pigs are the drollest looking animals imaginable. High upon the legs, thin and lanky, with a ridge of bristles on their backs, and long, cadaverous, melancholy countenances, they are no more like our milk-white high-fed porkers than is John Bull himself to a starved Hindoo. Their flesh is dark and forbidding-looking, though not amiss as to taste, and a Russian sucking-pig is about the most disgusting-looking dish I ever remember to have seen presented at table. The very cause which renders the hog most valuable to the Russian is that which prevents it being palatable to the Englishman, according to his peculiar idea; viz., the constant exercise he is obliged to take in quest of food; for, like the swine in Germany, he grubs about in the woods, fields, and roadsides, the herd to

which he belongs going off immense distances in the morning, and returning home late at night. There can be no question about which is the most natural state of the animal, or that in which he produces the best bristles, for his gross condition, when highly fed, is as much a disease as that of the fat boy or fat giantess of caravan show notoriety is, in comparison with ordinary humanity; but certainly the lean pigs of Russia, elevated on their long legs, and wallowing in the mire, are about the most detestable animals in nature. On regarding a Russian pig, one can perfectly comprehend the loathing which the Jews and Persians entertain towards the whole race, for probably the Eastern type of the "porker" and this Russian representative are the same.

As to fowls, they are tough and coarse; turkeys grow almost spontaneously (?), and are equal to any in England. The fuss and commotion which the poultry folks there, and in Scotland, make about rearing turkeys—in the latter country, cramming the young with treacle and oatmeal—are almost laughable, on beholding the little care bestowed on them in Russia. A turkey hen will bring up fine broods of ten and fifteen, without the least trouble. At Krasnoë-Celo the turkeys are a show, three or four hens strutting about with a little army of young. Geese are plentiful, also ducks, and are very fine, the ganders

the most bold and insulting I ever encountered.

As a general rule, farming in all its branches is far behind, and the dairy, with every facility to carry it out to perfection, is still a nonentity. The peasant women want the knowledge necessary to conduct it properly, and the ladies on even the smallest estates are, like our modern farmers' wives, so addicted to the pianoforte, French, and worsted-work, and their daughters to dress and novels, that such rustic concerns are beneath their attention. Indeed, the high court circle sets the classes below it a healthy example in this respect, for some of the noblest in the land have milk farms attached to their datches, or country houses, in which they take great interest.

The most unique establishment of this kind in Russia, or perhaps in any country, is that of Lîgova, the seat of Count Koucheliff, situated about nine miles from St. Petersburg, on the road to Peterhof, and on the picturesque shores of the Gulf of Finland. This estate comprises 9,000 acres, with 380 male serfs, and has for the last twenty-five years been under the entire charge of Mr. McLothlin, to whose practical intelligence this property owes its pre-eminent renown as being the model of order, high culture, and progress. Some of the stock raised here might compete with the finest in the world. As

to cereals, Mr. McLothlin carried off the large gold medal at the St. Petersburg Exhibition of 1850; and for the same case of specimens, which he transmitted intact to the great Exhibition of 1851 in London, two of the highest medals were awarded him.

The road from St. Petersburg to Peterhof is extremely picturesque, sweeping round one side of the Gulf of Finland, along a *plateau* several hundred feet above the level of the water. In some places, this land boundary slopes gradually down to the water's edge. Romantically posed upon one of these declivities is the dairy in question, which is approached from the back or pleasure-grounds that surround the residence of the Count. From this side it presents a long, low, substantially-built stone building, appropriately ornamented with the heads of oxen sculptured in stone. Descending a long flight of steps running down the side of this same building—which is of considerable extent below the level of the road—a broad gravelled *esplanade*, or terrace, presents itself, in the middle of which stands a sun-dial. From one side of this terrace, down towards the water's side, stretches a velvety lawn, tastefully studded with shrubs, fountains, and flower-beds; entering the building from this *esplanade*, the visitor finds himself in a spacious hall, resembling in its proportions and massive plainness an English

baronial hall of the middle ages, the ceiling, walls, floors, and furniture of which are all of highly-polished oak. Antlers of elk, oxen, and more than one "ewey's crooked horn" surmount the doorways or other elevations, and from each panel starts a bracket, supporting the plaster model of some peculiar breed of cow; a large oak table and handsome high-backed chairs of carved oak compose the furniture. In a closet contiguous, ranged upon shelves, are all kinds of glass drinking vessels and large glass bowls.

To this agreeable retreat the family of the Count frequently repair to drink milk, or lunch, or, in the cool of the glorious summer evenings, to gaze out upon the beauties of the gulf scenery. Again ascending, the visitor is introduced to the *vacherie*, or, more correctly speaking, the *salle de vaches*, where two dozen very fine milch kine, each one a belle of her peculiar kind, are housed, standing *vis-à-vis* in two rows, which are separated by a low partition running nearly the entire length of this vaccine *salon*. The name of each cow, in Russian character, is affixed to her own division. The *salle* is spacious, lofty, well lighted and ventilated, and the walls lime-washed white as snow. Nothing can exceed the précise cleanliness of every part of it; the very hides of the animals shine with good grooming, and the hoofs of several being white, positively look as if their owners were

slippered in white kid. The butter made at Lîgova is superlative, and richer in colour than is usual, for the Russian butter is generally of that white or lard-like hue preferred in London.

So great is the deficiency of butter in Russia, and moreover so dear and so bad, that people of limited income dispense with it altogether. Holstein chiefly supplies the capitals. The milk produced in the interior is very rich, and there can be no doubt that a great deal might be done with dairy farms alone, if they were properly managed, and that instead of importing an inferior kind of this nutritious article of food, Russia might supply all Europe with a very superior production; cattle are cheap, and food abundant.

The Crown does all it can to introduce a good system of farming; it has planted Swiss colonies, German colonies, military colonies, and Quaker colonies, and by its own progress in this direction endeavours to infuse a spirit of enterprise among the nobility. Those lying within this influence have speedily adopted the Imperial views, but the great body of proprietors—those whose movement in any progressive direction weighs most effectively on the empire at large—lay beyond the radii of this invigorating influence, and most of these, unfortunately, are content to plod on from year to year, in the nineteenth century, as their forefathers did in the tenth, perfectly satisfied if

they can just make ends meet. Few save money; they reckon their land and peasants as funded property, and the price of the produce their interest, and upon this the more provident live. If the crops fail, some extravagant habit must be laid aside; some trip to Western Europe, perhaps, or some member or members of a family, living at great expense in one of the capitals, must be recalled to country quarters. Some such contingency is the worst that can happen. If, on the other hand, a bountiful harvest brings an unusual superfluity of wealth, then extra pleasures are indulged in; but rarely is the overplus saved. The emancipation of the serfs would doubtless arouse these sleepers to action.

It is quite obvious that the class most wanted in the interior of Russia is that very important one, now almost extinct in old England, and to which not only the mother country, but her most distant colonies, and the great America herself, owe so much of their comfort and prosperity at the present day. I allude to the old-fashioned farmers of England, sensible practical men; having for helpmates sensible, plainly, but substantially, educated and active wives, whose experience was confined to the common concerns of everyday life, who kept the social wheel always turning, and all things in order around them; whose sons

became yeomen, also, in their turn, and the chief ambition of whose daughters was displayed in producing the best butter and cheese, and rearing the finest poultry. Russia stands greatly in need of good folks like these, for, at present, those in possession of the soil are either too much above it, or too far beneath it, and consequently little or nothing is effected in comparison with the immense capabilities of so splendid an arena for agricultural and stock-raising enterprise. Many of the seigneurs—at least, such as are progressive—have effected most important reforms on their estates by having Scotch or American overseers; all the most modern agricultural implements; and by the gradual enfranchisement of the serfs, whose voluntary labour, even at this comparatively early stage of the experiment, tells with the most encouraging results; but then, these are only as oases in the desert, as regards progressive cultivation, "few and far between." Then, there are the German and Swiss colonists in great numbers, who, since their arrival in the country during the reign of Catherine II., have multiplied in the land, and increased in wealth amazingly. But these are all too ignorant, and selfish, and sordid to diffuse what little knowledge they possess, for instead of hiring the Russian labourers, they manage to keep the work of their colonies just within their own powers of accomplishment,

or send for others of their countrymen to assist them; besides which, they are too much on a par with the serf ever to gain his respect sufficiently to command him. But in the meantime they enjoy a most lucrative monopoly in butter, eggs, milk, cream, vegetables, &c., which are all very excellent, it must be admitted. Thus, so far as teaching the native goes, there is the same want now that there was a hundred years ago.

Some such plan as that adopted by many of the landed proprietors in Ireland at the present time might be carried out advantageously in a general way all over Russia. For example:—the owners of several neighbouring estates determine to call in the best advice for the improvement of their land. They send to Scotland for a "first-rate" farmer, and conjointly pay him a highly remunerative salary for a certain number of years, in return for which, he gives to each estate a general superintendence and suggestions for improving it.

This plan has been found to work admirably in different parts of Ireland, and from the earnest desire of spirited proprietors in Russia to improve their possessions, were it once tried by a body of them, it would, in all probability, become general. On large properties, English, Scotch, and American stewards are in charge; but as small estates preponderate so immensely over the larger, some

such plan as this is the only one by which a small proprietor could afford to pay for first-rate agricultural supervision, and any other is worse than useless.

CHAPTER XVII.

Drive to Evora—Grandeur of the Scenery—Bark Building—Annual Departure of the Corn Barks—Desire of the Seigneurs to Procure Steam-Boats—Patrician and Plebeian Equestrians—Serpents and Wolves—"Philanthropos" Romantic Story—Changes—The Pedlar—"English Peppermint"—Delicate Manner of Receiving a Gift.

Our pleasant "sea-side" visit has but too quickly ended. We have taken our leave—some of us for ever—of the bright-eyed Hope, and are now *en route* to pay another visit, twenty-seven versts farther off, though still on the shores of the same river, driving through the most beautifully diversified country imaginable—

> "With sweetest odours breathing round,
> With every woodland glory crown'd,
> And skies of such cerulean blue,
> A veil of such transparent hue,
> That God's own eye seemed gazing through,"

and the beautiful river meandering in a succession

of wide sweeping curves, now in the far distance, now within a stone's throw.

Nothing could exceed the grand majesty of that silent scene. The immensity of space undulating in every variety of landscape; black forests, like wedges, penetrated the golden corn-fields; green meadows, studded with superb trees, picturesquely grouped, stretched along the banks of the shining river for miles and miles!

The eye seemed to dilate, and the senses to expand, in drinking in the glories of that beautiful scene—a succession of views—now reminding one of the Thames at Richmond Hill, and now of the Dee at Ballater; but the background was filled in with interminable forest, and not a village or hut, or vestige of humanity, appeared within the whole wide range of that grand *coup d'œil.* We might fancy ourselves the sole occupants of that superb arena, and—if God made trees, as He did man, full grown—that we gazed upon the first harvest-time of the new-made world. Silence, the most profound, pervaded all space, unbroken only by the lark "at heaven's gate singing;" while, the only visible object endowed with motion was the shining river, which, like a stream of molten silver, flowed silently on, scintillating as if in excess of joy at its glorious freedom.

After twenty-five versts of such scenery, we came suddenly upon a colony of cottages, half

hidden by a promontory of forest, and the illusion, that we were alone in this bright silent world, vanished. Not only were those of our race close at hand, but kind friends were also near, and a few paces more brought us to the porticoed doorway of a long low building, nicely painted and apparently well kept up. As we alighted, we were warmly welcomed by Mr. and Madame ——, who received us at the door, and conducted us into their hospitable abode, where such a semi-English air prevailed, that it was far easier to fancy one's self in the "appartement" of an English family on the French side of the English Channel, than in the house of a Russian noble, situated on the confines of a dense and almost interminable forest in the far interior; and whose nearest neighbours were serpents, wolves, and bears!

At this place we became acquainted with the great business of bark-building. Close upon the river's banks, several of these vessels are in course of construction; they are immense massive machines, built on the same principle as the log-houses of the peasants, and constructed from the sides, or edges, upwards to the keel. The edges of the vessel rest on trestles, so as to elevate it a foot and a-half from the ground; consequently, no docks or slips are necessary, the vessel being thus turned keel upwards, as light boats are sometimes reversed to be painted or caulked. The manner

of launching these is very simple. On the melting of the snows in the spring, or after tremendous rain, the river overflows its banks to a considerable distance, and surrounding the spot—to the depth of several feet—upon which the bark has been built, and which has been selected with all due regard to this contingency; it is then turned over by leverage power into the water, when the deck is put on, the masts raised and rigged, and she is otherwise made ready for her golden freight. Some of these barks are 200 feet long—I saw one of this length measured—and about 30 feet broad.

Although wood may be obtained at a stone's throw from the building yard, and requires little preparation for this description of vessel, yet the number of hands required for bark building on a large corn-estate is considerable, and that too at a time when they can ill be spared from agricultural concerns; the more to be regretted, as this is so much labour lost; these barks are generally broken up for firewood on arriving at their destination after their first and only voyage.

As many as sixty horses and thirty or forty men accompany one of these floating granaries. The voyage, if the wind is contrary, is often tedious, as they must then be towed.

The departure of the barks is one of the grand annual events of peasant life, and the return

of the men and horses is anticipated with no little excitement, for they generally bring fairings and finery to the women and little ones.

Produce from this and some of the neighbouring Governments has a double outlet. By means of the Zna, they communicate with the Don in the east, which conveys to Taganrog, on the sea of Azoff; and by the Oka with the Volga, at Simbirsk, and so, by the various links of communication, to the Baltic. For the last ten years some of the proprietors of Tambov have been desirous of procuring flat-bottomed iron steamers to replace these barks, and it is only the difficulty of not knowing how and where to apply about procuring them—this is the case with the Count, who was the original projector of this plan—that the clumsy old bark system is still in use.* Such a wonderfully linked chain of canal

* Since the above was written, an important article appeared in the *Times* on this very subject, a portion of which is to the following effect: "The Russian merchants seem fully alive to the immense advantage of steam as an element of modern commerce, and extensive orders are being executed in England for the supply of iron vessels to navigate the Russian waters. Messrs. Mitchell & Co., of Walker, on the Tyne, have recently entered into large contracts for building those vessels, and from the peculiarity of the service, some of them will be of unusual proportions; for example, one, a paddle steamer, is 200 feet long and 30 broad, and, when fully laden, will only draw 18 inches of water. The form of the hull is peculiar, the bow being shaped like a spoon, to overcome the difficulties of the navigation."

and river communication intersects the empire throughout, that the facilities for steam-boat traffic is very great; and when it is considered, that the magnificent Volga is navigable from its very source to the Caspian Sea, a distance of 2,700 miles without a cataract, it is surprising that a line of steamboats have not long since been in active operation.

A class of such vessels, made available for passengers, would doubtless induce Russian families to make acquaintance with many of the picturesque beauties of their fatherland, who now spend the summer in Western Europe.

From the bark builder's we proceeded to inspect the recently-chosen site of a stone house to be forthwith erected as a Gospodinksy Dom. In a valley below the *plateau* chosen as the site of the new mansion, a loud shouting attracted our attention, and presently a herd of several hundred horses galloped in detachments across it towards the river, followed soon after by a Mazeppa kind of turn-out, in the shape of their herdsman, who lay, rather than sat, along the back of a superb bay, and for whose arrival the whole herd, having been stopped in their flying speed by the river, now awaited him on its banks. He plunged into the stream, followed by the others. It was a curious sight, indeed, to behold so many horses' heads dotting the river at the same time. From

establishments such as these the military are supplied with horses. In the stables of Evora, the estate in question, are several animals of rare beauty—one, a Persian, black and glossy, and graceful as a greyhound, with large giraffe-like eyes, sparkling with fire.

In most cases, in the interior, the stables are at a considerable distance from the dwelling-house, and form little villages. At Evora, they are ranges of log-huts, with twenty or thirty in a row, being built round a riding-school, considerably larger than that at Krasnoë-Celo, though neither so well arranged nor well kept. Here the horses are broken in when the weather is intensely cold or very warm.

Russian ladies in the interior have thus the opportunity of becoming first-rate horsewomen. In the capitals, every lady of *ton* must be seen on horseback for fashion's sake; but there is no such feeling among the Russian fair sex as that downright love of the exercise for its own sake, which carries English women occasionally—out of their latitude perhaps—over "five-barred gates," in at the death, &c. In the interior, one never encounters a lady on horseback, and rarely a civilian gentleman; but the peasants ride to their work and back, be the distance ever so short. One of the chief characteristics of everyday outdoor summer life, is the out-going and return of de-

tachments of those brown-coated and sandalled equestrians, who, mounted upon stout little ponies, and with their sandalled legs depending rather ungracefully, shoulder some light implement of husbandry, such as their cradle-scythes, or a ploughshare, on some projecting point or angle of which hangs the bass-bag with their provisions for the day; while a little, classic shaped, black earthenware vessel, full of kvass, dangles by its string handles from some other convenient part. Horses of all kinds appear to be in great abundance, and though some of them may not be much in appearance, it is incredible of what they are capable. A poor agricultural peasant in England would think himself a rich man, owning a horse; but here few are without.

On our return to the house, a marshy place was pointed out as being the home or haunt of serpents of a rather formidable length, which are seen sometimes in great numbers, and the bite of which is fatal.

Wolves also abound. Even while we were talking about them, one was observed at some distance, loitering about the outstanding huts of the village. I had previously seen several in the grounds at Krasnoë, and on the high road met one in the very teeth, but truly—

"Where ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise."

Hitherto I had supposed that these loutish-looking animals were dogs of a peculiar kind, for many of the watch-dogs resemble them—and as I stood looking after the one in question, I wondered why his gait differed so much from that of other dogs, and that the track he left in the dust was nearly a straight line.

And again another leave-taking! almost as deeply laden with regret as were the sorrowful adieux at our departure from C——, though our pleasures here were of a totally different kind. The short snatches of repose enjoyed at Evora were among my own most agreeable *souvenirs* of life in the interior. Our hostess, Elizavetta Petrovna, besides being an elegant and accomplished woman, speaking English, French, German, and Russ fluently, was a musical performer of first-rate talent, and, more than all, the only child of the refined "Philanthropos," the author of many elegant articles, both poetic and prosaic, which some years since appeared occasionally in several of the English periodicals. His daughter had accumulated his writings—both published and in manuscript—and the perusal of some of these occupied many delightful hours in the retirement of Elizavetta Petrovna's boudoir, where I had only to look up from time to time, as any sentiment particularly struck me, at the handsome effigy of the author of it, which, in the form of a

full-sized portrait graced the wall, his fine intellectual forehead, open sunny expression of countenance, and clear, calm blue eye, with a twinkle of fun in the corner of it, all characteristics of that refinement, generosity, and truth for which he was so remarkable.

The history of this gentleman is sufficiently interesting. "Philanthropos"—his *nom de plume*—was a native of the "Emerald Isle," and like the

> "Blakes and O'Donnells, whose fathers resigned,
> The green hills of their youth among strangers to find
> That repose which, at home, they had sighed for in vain,"

sold his patrimony, and bidding his cherished Erin for ever adieu, determined to make the tour of the world, and settle under that form of government most congenial to his tastes. He resided for some time in America, but very soon broke up the establishment he had formed there, and made his way overland through Siberia into Russia in Europe, resting for some time on the Siberian confines of this empire. While there, he stayed at the house of a Greco-Russian priest. The priest had a niece, an orphan whom he had adopted, a young maiden of seventeen, whose modesty and simplicity rather than her good looks, found a warm admirer in the refined and sensitive Irishman. He was vanquished at first sight, and demanding her hand after some little delay—for

the good uncle was unwilling to part with his child to a stranger—consent was obtained, they were married, and set off almost immediately for St. Petersburg. After a fair trial, Russia became the land of his adoption, and for many years he represented her interests as consul on the Pacific, subsequently exchanging that outlying post for one nearer his new fatherland. Here his house was open to the literati of all nations, and with that liberality inherent to his nature and nation, his purse was equally so to the needy, no matter what their country.

How soon family features, characteristics, and all nationality are lost, when a branch of a family is transplanted to a foreign soil! As I listened to this recital from the lips of his daughter, her daughter and son, fine, black-eyed, elegant little creatures—but the very anitpodes, in every feature, to their fair-haired maternal ancestor—stood by, all attention at the frequent mention of grandpapa's name, but otherwise not comprehending one word of grandpapa's mother tongue.

Once more the wanderers have alighted at Krasnoë; our absence had not been of long duration, yet a great change had passed over the face of nature. The harvest had been reaped and gathered in, the "last rose of summer" had faded and gone, leaving the stately dahlia queen of the parterre. The grape-like bunches of the wolf-

berry were already tinged with their brilliant scarlet. The last water-melon, the solitary remnant of the thousands that had been, overlooks, from its elevation on a brick, a desolation of sear and yellow leaves. The sunflower no longer gazes sunward, but droops its seed-laden calyx, mature for the coming oil harvest. The seed-cucumbers, in their yellow coats, lie basking beneath the still glowing rays of the noon-day sun. The tobacco has been gathered in and hung up to the rafters of the capacious seed-house to dry, which fact becomes intelligible to beast or body the moment a nose is popped within its precincts, by the fit of sneezing which succeeds. The delicate white and grey blossoms of the neighbouring poppy-field have long since disappeared, leaving their ripe heads full of small grey seed, which is now being gathered for oil. Peasant women pluck these heads and put them into pocket bags, which they wear suspended before them, stopping ever and anon to shake the contents of a poppy-head into their mouths, which ceremony, viewed from a distance, conveys the effect of an Italian swallowing his ell of maccaroni. The head is thrown back and arm upraised, and the large head held pendent by its small stalk, is thus dexterously—by means of a continued shaking movement—emptied into the yawning gulf. This is by no means an easy operation, but one at which both

gentle and simple get *au fait* before the poppy-harvest is over. Everyone eats poppy-seed just now, as they do bonbons on a *fête* day, and truly they are, according to peasant phraseology, "Otchane f choosnia," or very good eating. These seeds are also mixed with honey and baked into little cakes, and with apples in the same way, are very nice.

In the farm-yard this is a busy time. Gaily-garbed groups of women are engaged; some feed an English thrashing-machine, to which they draw the attention of the Barishnæ, as something very wonderful.

"Come here with me," said one of them; "you shall see how much work *he* does, and how quickly he does it, too," when she described, in a few graphic laconisms, the whole of *his* operations, concluding these particulars with the information that it had come from Germany; the English maker's name was on it, and for the honour of my country, I endeavoured to make her comprehend that it was not German, but English. By some anomalous geographical reckoning of her own, however, she admitted that it might be English, but that it was German as well.

The Russian wheat is all kiln-dried; the poorest peasants even have the necessary apparatus attached to their cottages for this important operation, by means of which the Russian wheat is

rendered impervious to heat, cold, or maggot, and if properly stored, will keep perfectly sound for many years; as an example in proof of this, the following incident may be adduced. The summer after peace with Russia was proclaimed, a French sloop "hove to," one morning, off a village on the banks of the Thames. The Captain of the vessel was the owner of her, and his wife and children lived on board; one of the family was suddenly taken ill, and required medical attendance from shore. From the peculiar circumstances of the case, the captain met with considerable sympathy from some visitors spending a few weeks there, and in return he entered into the details of some of his private matters. He mentioned that he had been up to London for his cargo, which was Russian wheat; this wheat had been imported into England previous to the war, therefore had been in store during the continuance of hostilities; he had consequently obtained it at a cheap rate, and, while rejoicing over his bargain, he laughed in his sleeve at the vendor of the grain, adding, with a knowing wink, as he debated on the superior quality of his purchase, "But it is as hard as shot; it will keep for fifty years, if I like. Ah! I have been in the interior of Russia, and know all about how it is dried."

And now that the bustle of the harvest-time is nearly over, *apropos* comes the pedlar; sometimes

this eloquent individual appears in the humble garb of the peasant pedestrian, carrying all his wealth on his back; but he comes occasionally in his equipage, a roomy cart, and accompanied by an assistant. It is truly astonishing what variety and quantity are stowed away in that little carriage; there are English, Swiss, and Russian muslins, all of the best, and only a few copeikii dearer than in the capitals; also silks, velvets, gloves, stockings, English calico, Russian de laines and foulards; English imitation lace; Clarke's cotton; English, Dutch, and Russian-made tapes, buttons, and threads; English needles and pins; Persian-twilled cotton dresses—which are very pretty—Russian-made ribbons, hooks and eyes, laces, combs, brushes, boots and shoes, bijouterie, genuine eau de Cologne, and, among many other things, English essence of peppermint. This valuable carminative is highly prized throughout the empire; it is procurable at the meanest shop in the poorest town in the interior, and I am told that it is to be found all over Siberia. It is known under its own name, "peppermint," and is the genuine green extract, the more purified essence is not popular.

More than one of the party took advantage of this opportunity to purchase *souvenirs* for their various favourites among the servants and peasants; the distribution of these was quite a little

ceremony. The more sophisticated of the household servants, on receipt of the gifts, examined them well before making their bows and tendering their thanks. But with the simple folk of the village there was far more form; instead of retaining the present to look at it, as the others had done, with a refinement of delicacy, easier felt than expressed, the peasant passed it on to a friend beside her, not even permitting her doubtless anxious eye to rest on it, when, stepping forward with a slow and dignified movement, she stooped with much grace to kiss the hand which had bestowed it, bowed, and then rejoined her friend, to feast her eyes on her *cadeau*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Departure from Krasnoë-Celo—Lost in Woods—Moonrise and Wolves—A Terrible "Fix"—Region of Sand—Taking a Village by Storm—The Ladies take the Management—English Beds—Forest Regions—Vladimir City—Pine Apples—The Golden Gate—The Peasant Gallants—Arrival at St. Petersburg.

Then quick! we have but a second.
* * * * * * *
For Time, the churl, hath beckon'd,
And we must away, away.

"THE evil day" has come at last, that we must leave the enticing "Krasnoë!" Having seen the month fairly out, and a bright October fairly in, the dreaded morning at length arrived; all was bustle and preparation in the great quadrangle on that eventful day. It was no longer the jaunting car, with its six superlative bays, and the satellite cabriolet, with the daintily-stepping "chest-

nut," setting out on some merry excursion, but our "auld acquaintance," the family coach, and its *avant garde*, our well-remembered travelling home, bound once more on a long and serious journey.

Our return route lay through the government of Vladimir, an arrangement made in order to benefit by the fine *chaussée* between the city of Vladimir and the ancient capital; and more than one of the travellers rejoiced that so good an opportunity presented itself of visiting a place so replete with historical association.

As the route from Krasnoë-Celo to Vladimir was a cross one, and the latter the first town at which post-horses were procurable, an arrangement had been made with the peasants of the former place to supply horses thither. Six were therefore harnessed to the carriage, and four to the *tarentasse*, and half-a-dozen more had been sent on the previous day. These, amongst them, were expected to do seventy-five versts the first, and fifty on each of the three following days, resting four hours after every eight hours of work. For the job, the peasants were to have about £12 English, which was to be shared among the three to whom the animals belonged, and who accompanied their property, *en postillon*.

The Count in his cabriolet, a whole cavalcade of friends, and all the dogs about the place, accompanied us nearly thirty versts on our way,

when a most impressive leave-taking ensued. Here, at a small village on the road-side, we bade adieu to friends whose polished refinement and warm-hearted, hospitable amiabilities it is impossible ever to forget. With much trouble the dogs were secured, so determined were some of them to follow us. With tearful eyes and heavy hearts, the travellers watched the group that in turn watched them, until distance intervened, and they were lost to sight—to one of that little party probably for ever.

At this place we had so far changed horses that four relieved four of the carriage hacks, and two of the others replaced two in the *tarentasse*, the six, just off duty, following in the rear. At sunset we crossed a broad river by means of a contrivance like the ferry across the Zna, and ascended a steep hill of sand.

Twilight crept stealthily on as the equipages drew near a forest, apparently dense and impenetrable, and which stretched out before us, right and left, as far as the eye could reach in every direction—a world of forest—the only clear space being the narrow road we travelled, and round which ran a formidable black wall of trees. Our driver appeared to be making for some particular opening, having already passed several, when a loud shout from his comrades in the rear arrested attention.

"You are past the right road," shouted one.

"Come back," roared another.

"We have not reached it yet," returned our "black beard," who turned back, however, and having reached his comrades, a parley ensued.

But it was evident "the council were divided in their sentiments," and the two postilions with the convoy taking their own way, turned their horses' heads and cantered off as fast as the loamy soil —which, on the confines of the forest, was one part sand—would permit.

Our "black beard" followed slowly, dogged and sulky, and a certain predilection in favour of this, the younger and more acute driver, satisfied us that he was right.

After a toilsome trot of several versts, the obstinate leaders, not being able to find a road where they had expected it, yielded to their younger comrade in charge of the *tarentasse*, and the horses' heads being once more turned round, we retraced the same route for the third time. Not one of the party knew to a certainty his whereabouts in that great Russian world.

All the openings* which we had already passed we passed again, and others besides; and how, without a map or any apparent guide, our younger Jehu knew the route, was perfectly incomprehen-

* Clearances are made in all the crown forests for the purpose of admitting air.

sible, especially as night—though brilliantly starry—had overtaken us!

A dark narrow strip of opening in the darker wall now presented itself, and we found ourselves in a sand-rut, just wide enough for the vehicle and the inside pair of horses, the "outsides" being obliged to scramble as they best could along an embankment of sand on each side.

We were thus considerably below the level of the forest, the roots of the trees being almost on a line with our heads. Our only prospect, therefore, was into its dark recesses, which appeared to have some peculiar fascination—for peering into these mazes as we slowly progressed, many an outline of bear rampant and hungry wolf kept the imagination for some time in full play, till, weary of the adventureless watching, the eye roved up to the narrow strip of star-lit blue above, exploring up and down and back again for some old familiar friend, to tell us of our whereabouts.

Not a sound broke the universal silence save the merry tinkle of our wolf-bell, the snorting of the horses, and an occasional shout of encouragement from one or other of the drivers to their already jaded animals.

Fifteen versts more of this! It seemed utterly impossible, and to make matters worse, Mr. Daniel Koulikoff began to distrust his own powers of leadership. There was no resource,

however—proceed we must, there being no room to turn back, and what would have been the result of a party coming from the opposite direction, I know not. Happily, that was a problem we were not called upon to solve. But the peculiar destiny which so obviously attends the confiding, child-like Russian, had not forsaken Mr. Koulikoff in his dilemma. So, having stumbled into the wrong turning, he stumbled comfortably out of it; just as a vague apprehension of starvation and death, and bones picked clean by the cormorants and the wolves, rose like a spectre in the dim distance, we debouched into a kind of Seven Dials, St. Giles's, when a satisfactory exclamation, equivalent to "all's right," escaped our Jehu, and with the instinct that leads an *habitué* of the aforesaid *quartier* out of that incomprehensible labyrinth, so our leader directed his cavalry safe out of this; and striking off at right angles from the road we had just left, he pursued his way along a broad open road covered with grass, which, in the imperfect light, looked like a spacious field.

We now proceeded at tolerable speed, until one ascent after another, like a succession of terraces, tested the strength of the horses to a most painful degree.

It was now eight o'clock, the time we should, under ordinary circumstances, have reached the

station at which we were to sleep. Neither man nor beast had partaken of food, water, or rest from two o'clock in the afternoon; but the worst was yet to come. A hill so steep now presented itself that the horses absolutely refused to stir another step until they had duly rested; and revilings, blows, pokes, entreaties, were all alike useless.

The soil here was a rich soft loam, mixed with fine sand, into which the wheels sank so deep, that the pull for the cavalry of the convoy was tremendous.

Our lighter vehicle having gained the top of the hill with facility, we had the misery of sitting there, listening to the yelling and shouting which fell upon the ears of the poor worn-out animals that tried in vain to move the family-coach, and to the heavy blows, from heavy cudgels, which fell upon their backs. This latter infliction was insupportable, and therefore, suggesting to Mr. Koulikoff that he had better take the four *tarentasse* horses to the support of the others, and get the men—two of whom rode the convoy horses *en postillon*—down to their feet, and above all, to spare the stick, to encourage the horses by kind words, and to lend them aid by all pushing the heavy vehicle from behind, we got out and walked as far as we were able beyond hearing of those yells and shouts.

We had now gained the brow of the steep hill, which was flanked on all sides by giants of the forest, chiefly superb firs, and these stretched out, far in advance, over an apparently interminable *plateau*, leaving the travellers the *trajet* of a splendid avenue, broad as the Nevski Prospekt.

Nothing could exceed the magnificent wildness of the scene which here burst upon the astonished gazer! The full moon, whose coming had been for some time announced by the pale yellow beams which illuminated the horizon to our right, rendering every twig and spray on the pointed tips of the black-green firs distinctly visible, had now risen above the horizon, and though, from the deep shade of our dark avenue, she was herself still hidden from our view, yet her silver light gleamed over the entire forest valley, which, in the form of an amphitheatre, lay far below us, extending to the very verge of the horizon all round, and producing an effect of grandeur and magnificence indescribable. As the "Queen of Night" advanced in her starlit path, our avenue next came in for its share of illumination. On one side, the trees, and even the recesses of the forest, for a considerable distance, were lighted up as brilliantly as at noonday, while the opposite side was steeped in shade black as midnight.

But a new and very disagreeable feature

attended the presence of the moon, which was nothing more or less than the howling of the wolves. All parts of the forest reverberated with their monotonous and horrid outcry, from our own immediate vicinity to the most distant part of the valley we had left.

While none of them made their appearance, we walked on, supposing our numbers would protect us from anything like an attack; but when, at length, several of them leisurely crossed our path —strolling from one side of the forest to the other—we deemed it prudent to retrace our steps, the speed of our retreat being considerably accelerated by the knowledge that many a fiery glance was upon us, for the glare of their fiery lenses gleamed out from their dark haunts among the trees, like cats' eyes in the dark.

The carriage remained where we had left it, the wheels being imbedded to the axle-trees in the rich soft soil, of which the entire region around was chiefly composed.

There was, therefore, no help for it but to do what should have been done at first, viz., unload it. In a few minutes the ground around was strewed with imperials and packages; a few gay touches of picturesque costume alone were wanting, to imagine a Spanish or Italian diligence robbery scene. We entertained little dread of brigands, however; our only fear was the wolves.

After an hour's tugging and pushing, the unwieldy family coach at length surmounted the hill, and, the imperials and packages being reinstated, all jogged on at snail's pace for several versts, when a soil of fine heavy sand succeeding, we were worse off than ever.

To get out and walk was impossible; the men sank above their ankles at every step, reminding one of Les Landes, the district of sand and grapes and stilt-walkers. As the ladies made a most determined stand against the horses being beaten, the drivers were obliged to content themselves with such auxiliaries as "Pagan," "Fools," and "Little doves." At every revolution of the wheels, the hard-breathing animals had to stop and recover themselves; so that we were exactly three-quarters of an hour making little more than half a verst. After indescribable exertions, we had just cleared the sand and the forest, and found ourselves on a tolerably easy road, when one of the horses dropped down, fairly spent. The poor animal had to be taken out of the harness, and was left staggering by the road side. The peasants made sure of finding him somewhere in the neighbourhood on their return, picking about "all right," though certain recollections of more than one skeleton of bleached bones that I had observed *en route* to the interior, suggested the possibility of the reverse.

Moving lights in the distance tell that a village is near, but the drivers declare that the horses are too tired to eat their usual provender. Knowing how fond Russian horses are of black bread, I prevailed on some of the party to accompany me in a search after a few loaves of it, while the equipages drew up in the middle of the road, and the men leant against them for support, almost as tired as the horses. Lights gleamed in the house of the priest, and thither went one, we others knocking at every door where the windows showed a light, gathering as we went—at one, a pound or two, at another, three or four, for we had a large famished family to feed—giving them in return twice the value, which usually evoked a prayer for our safety on the way.

At one house, an open window on the first floor showed a light, and the bread-seekers, not having time to go round by the door, made use of the sill of a lower window, placed temptingly underneath, by which means the head of the inquirer just reached the open casement above.

"Daë men-ya chernie hleb," or, "Give me black bread," shouted the stranger.

"Chort vasmaïte," or, "The Devil take thee," returned a female voice from within, followed by the cries of an infant whom this midnight intrusion had doubtless disturbed, sufficiently accounting for this very un-Russian like re-

ception of a request deemed sacred by most of them.

Collecting our purchases, we returned to the drooping beasts, and their exhausted drivers, with arm-loads of the staff of life, sending one of them back to the village baker—upon whom we had luckily stumbled—for more. Truly it was a glorious sight, to see the round brown loaves tumbling down, one after the other, from the shop window on the second floor, until there were enough and to spare.

Several of the horses were too tired to eat; but by dint of soaking the bread in water, and otherwise coaxing them, they were induced to make a tolerable meal, greatly to the surprise of the men, who seemed equally astonished that ladies should trouble themselves about such things, or know anything of horses.

And now, revived by rest and refreshment, the animals completed the remaining six versts to the station in comparatively quick time; and much to the satisfaction of all parties, we at length drove into the court-yard of a large private house at the little town of L——, still in the Government of Tambov, and six hours after our time.

This was the town house of a most agreeable friend, an official in the Government, whose wife was an Englishwoman.

This amiable couple had kindly come from

their summer residence—a distance of thirty versts —expressly to entertain us here, knowing that the public accommodation was none of the best. An English tea-dinner, and numberless English comforts and contrivances awaited us, and, more grateful than all, clean English beds.

Early next morning we are again *en route* among the forests, coming occasionally upon small scattered villages, where we always found superlative honey, eggs, milk, black bread, mead, and kvass, as well as cucumbers, which here they ate with honey. At several we asked for potatoes, but they had never even heard of them.

These forests belong to the Crown, and are valuable for the honey and bees' wax they supply, as well as for the bark of the Linden tree, from which so many household necessaries of peasant-life are made; and which affords ample employment for both sexes during the winter. But the principal occupation of the men in the season, is the preparation of spars for the navy.

But we are already at Vladimir! Vladimir! that third ancient capital of Russia, so intimately connected with the general history of the empire, yet whose own eventful story is an exclusive and deeply interesting whole.

Vladimir, like most Russian cities, is situated near a river, viz., the Kliasma; from which the traveller climbs by a precipitous ascent to the

town, which is picturesquely seated on a *plateau* at a considerable elevation.

After winding through a suburb of gardens and terrace, we entered the principal street, spacious, handsome, and clean. At the end of this is situated the once famous "Golden Gate," which is connected with so many of the early associations of this city and its suburbs. In many of the window-sills of the houses, we remarked pine-apples growing luxuriantly in flower-pots by way of ornament.

Near the "Golden Gate," we found an excellent hotel, where it was proposed we should breakfast, and go on, being now duly provided with the regular post-horses. Here the Krasnoë peasants presented themselves to offer their adieux. Each in succession approached their lady, and with the dignity of knights of the olden time, cap in hand, they stooped with graceful bend to kiss her hand, saluting the younger ladies on the cheek. With many prayers and kind wishes for the benefit of the travellers, they made their bows and departed.

At Moscow we stopped a day or two to rest; and finally reached Petersburg in the middle of October, having been a fortnight *en route*. The evenings grew chilly as we approached the north, but the leaves still clothed the trees, though tinged with yellow.

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CHAPTER XIX.

Peterhof, the Favourite Residence of the Tzar—La Sylphide—A Frigate on Camels—A "Fast" Lady—The Circassians and the Scotchman—The "Cottage"—The Tzar's "Look-out" House—The Cabane—The Emperor and David—The Tzar selects the Colour of the "Cabane"—Arrival of the Heir-Apparent.

THE term of my visit to these northern shores had expired with the thaw, but still I lingered, unwilling to depart. And now came the tantalizing self-inquiry—whether to return home immediately, as those near and dear to me fully expected, or to accede to the urgent entreaties of the loved ones around me that I would stay with them till the fall? Overwhelmed, I yielded to the latter, and while I sat down to frame the most conciliatory epistle I could pen, to the beloved expectants at home, the Countess dis-

patched a servant to Peterhof in search of a house.

One brilliant fresh morning, about a week after Alexie's visit, found us floating away on the broad blue bosom of the Neva, to the place of our rustic seclusion at Peterhof.

The elegant "Sylphide," in which we embarked, is a new and costly import from Greenock, built on the model of the Clyde boats, and fitted up in the most superlative manner.

Having nearly lost sight of the noble iron bridge which connects the imperial city with her attendant isles, the usual concomitants of a river scene present themselves, but on a grand, imposing scale, every object arranged as for a picture. Crown steamers, yachts, Dutch galliots, rowing and sailing boats, and small craft of all kinds, line the massive granite quays, or scantily dot the broad stream. Ever and anon the gaudy gondola-shaped boat of the *Perrivosgick*, or Neva boatman, shoots across from either side with its *empressé* fare; or others, taking it more leisurely, float slowly along with the current, till, rendered diminutive by distance, they remind one of gaily-painted fireflies sporting on the stream.

Nothing appears really alive to the business of life but a crowd of deeply laden barks, hurrying under a press of sail towards the Northern Hive;

camels,* conveying a frigate and five hundred men to the Emperor's fine building-slips at the capital; and two *affairés* little tug-boats, the "Diana" and "Samson" by name, as I learned by inscriptions on their paddle-boxes in my own mother tongue.

We now approached the *debouchure* of the Neva, where, after a short but useful course of eighteen leagues, it mingles the waters of Lake Ladoga with those of the Gulf of Finland, the last link of the long chain which unites the traffic of the far distant Caspian with that of the Baltic Sea.

Here the gulf presents a portion of its surface, bounded by the long dark streak of the Finnish coast on the right. The land boundary on the left, forming a crescent round one side of the gulf, rises, terrace-like, to a considerable height above its margin, and thence, stretching far away in undulations, terminates in a hilly ridge on the horizon. Round this crescent runs the picturesque road from St. Petersburg to Peterhof, traceable for nearly thirty versts by the green-roofed *datches* of the nobility and British residents, till, far as the

* From the insufficiency of water in the Neva for ships drawing a large quantity, an ingenious contrivance is resorted to. The keel of the frigate is placed between two large flat boxes containing water, the quantity of which is regulated by the ebb and flow of the tide, and thus, "high and dry," the ship is borne along.

eye can reach, the datches become numerous and thick-set; a monastery peeps out from the luxuriant trees, the gilded mosque-like spire domes of the palace church, the palace, the "English cottage" palace in the park below, and, lower still, the small palace, or "court," of Peter, from which the lovely Peterhof takes its name.

Grateful sight to many on board! for a squall, no unfrequent visitor to the gulf, had suddenly changed the "blue above and the blue below," to murky grey, and caused our "Sylphide," which had hitherto glided along in a most graceful manner, to roll about very uncomfortably, now and then giving a headlong plunge which threatened the annihilation of us all, transforming my late *debonnaire* and talkative *compagnons de voyage* into faded-looking, inanimate mutes.

More than one manly form measured his length on the velvet cushions below, "his martial cloak around him," while fair heads lay low on the deck, or reclined on the nearest support.

The noisy Babel was hushed. Nothing remained of the clamour that had been, but the low mumbling of a knot of naval courtiers near the wheel, who, alike indifferent to the raging elements, the pitching boat, or the creature sufferings around them, continued their discourse in broken phrases, between long-drawn whiffs of Jewcoff's "superlatives," for which privilege they

had preferred paying a two-shilling fare in our steamer to a free passage in a Crown boat, where smoking is prohibited.

To some such weighty consideration we were probably indebted for the company of a lovely woman who sat opposite to us, and whose Madonna-like countenance I had been intently admiring for some time, for, thrusting a small, delicately-gloved hand into the pocket of her cashmere morning dress, she pulled out an embroidered case, from whence, leisurely selecting a paperos, she shut it with a loud snap, and returned it to her pocket, looking round meanwhile as if in search of something, which, in my ignorance, I supposed to be some rough surface whereon to rub a lucifer, but one of the naval smokers before alluded to, better acquainted with the nature of the difficulty, gallantly approached her, and proffered the lighted end of his cigar. The lady rose, their heads drew near, she obtained a light and gracefully thanked him; he bowed, and they both resumed their seats, she—the beautiful Madonna!—oh, tell it not to Punch—sat there puffing away most manfully, her elbow over the side, and her legs across.

My friends informed me that she was really a woman of some consequence, married to a man of high rank, and the mother of several children; and furthermore that she was a capital "whip"—a very uncommon accomplishment for this part of

the world, "fast" ladies of this genus being rare in Russia—that she was a not indifferent swearer, and that, *par fantaisie*, she smoked green tea.

On *terra firma* the equipage of the Countess awaited us, which having entered, a second or two conveyed us within the precincts of the magnificent park that skirts the shore right and left for several versts, climbing over a succession of terraces inland, till it gains the seat of the little town above.

Through a splendid perspective of foliage appears, about half a mile distant, on a terrace at least sixty feet high, the Imperial palace, an elegant building, now dazzling white in the bright glare of the sunshine which had followed the squall.

Thus viewed, the palace at first sight appears to be suspended, or lightly to rest on the tops of the trees. Approaching nearer, the fountains and shrubs on the rising ground behind are perceptible through its open windows and doors. Sentinels, with pendulum-like movement, passed to and fro; the Empress' guards, in their dashing white uniforms and burnished silver helmets, which shone and glittered like silver suns, Grenadiers, Cossacks, and Lancers, sauntered along the terrace, or strolled through the courts of the palace. Over the parapet of the terrace bridge lounged a group of Circassians, looking down

into a huge basin beneath, in the midst of which, on a pedestal of rock, stands a golden Samson in the act of distending to their utmost span the jaws of a golden lion, from the throat of which an enormous jet shoots upwards to an immense height, covering with a pearly shower the shining Cupidons, goddesses, and fawns, which recline on the turfy banks around, swelling the Samsonian stream by smaller contributions from shells, cornucopiæ, &c., &c., until all, mingling in one roaring, gushing, foaming torrent, rolls down a slightly sloping canal into the gulf.

Beside this canal we were now borne along at the utmost speed of four spirited "thorough-breds," which, but a day from the capital, were novices yet to the waterfalls of Peterhof.

Many were the sidelong, uneasy glances they cast down on the numberless little golden elves lying in ambush along the banks, each crouched beneath its *jet d'eau*, which covered it as with a glass shade.

Light bridges conduct to the innumerable footpaths and drives which intersect this shady park in all directions; and across which our resuscitated fellow passengers were hurrying towards their homes in every description of vehicle in vogue—some on foot—those whose homes probably lay near the palace slowly ascended the long flights of steps planted in the sloping lawn,

and leading to the terrace, before mentioned; while others, more active, had already gained the summit.

Among the latter was a Scotchman, evidently a fresh comer, by the healthy bloom on his cheek, sporting a braw new "Glengarry" bonnet and plaid. The mountaineers from above had watched his flying ascent up the steps, two at a time, with considerable curiosity, wondering, no doubt, in a land where the movements are measured and slow, what manner of man he could be. On his arrival *en haut* they all faced about, each party eyeing the other with infinite surprise. I regretted the demi-Scotch costume of my compatriot, which contrasted even grotesquely with the silver-bound tunics of blue, loose sleeves, yellow vests, and high black caps of those hostage eagles of the Caucasus.

Turning an angle, our route lay along the base of this terrace-surmounted lawn, and here the full beauty of this *Paradis à la Versailles* opens fully to view.

A roaring, like the voice of a cataract, caused our terrified leaders to start aside, and the next moment we were gazing at a mountain of foaming water, which, rushing precipitously down a flight of gilt steps, produces the gorgeous appearance which has acquired for it the appellation of "the Golden Mountain," and which, when illuminated

by the sun's rays, can better be imagined than described.

To this succeed fountains of every device imaginable. Here, one encounters a number of grim-looking lions, guarding a marble bath, which they continually replenish with crystal streams from their grinning mouths; farther on, a tiny ocean wherein the sea-god skims the "mighty deep" in his chariot of shell, drawn by sea-horses, and accompanied by Triton and various *attachés* of his submarine court. Still farther, a lake, where, on the ringing of a bell, gold and silver fish flock in shoals to be fed. Again an epitome of the world of waters, where gilded dolphins "bare their backs of gold." And, lower down in the park, contiguous to the little palace of Peter the Great, is the delicious, never-to-be-forgotten *féerie* of "mon plaisir," where the fountains sport with the fairest flowers, "all under the shade of the greenwood tree," affording the most delightful of all cool retreats on the hottest summer's day.

From hence, a picturesque drive meanders for many miles close along the shores of the gulf, and still in the park, under shade of the trees.

All this is open to the public, with the exception of a small space not so large as that surrounding the houses of many of our nobility, which the Imperial family keep exclusively for them-

selves, and within this enclosure is situated the "cottage palace" of the Tzar. The boundary of their small domain is marked by a low wall, which for aught save a landmark is superfluous; as the Russians, one and all, are particularly sensitive on the subject of intrusion, deeming it a great indelicacy to dodge the movements of the Imperial family during the short period of their retreat from public life; consequently, the mode of living during the six or eight weeks of their sojourn here, is so private that no account of it can be obtained but through highly privileged channels. Of all the lions of Peterhof the "cottage" is the most difficult of access. Once a-year, the grounds surrounding it are thrown open to the public, when the Tzar, on this solitary occasion, exchanges his military uniform for the dress of a civilian, in which he appears on the balcony, accompanied by the Tzarina, their children and grandchildren. This little residence is a perfect picture of rustic beauty. As its name implies, its style is English, being a kind of demi-Tudor structure of two stories, with numerous gable fronts, which are overhung by broad eaves: from beneath these, bright, sunny-looking windows peep out, round which cluster flowers and creeping plants in luxurious profusion. This little *bijou* is set in a *parterre* of simple and elegant design, and bedecked with the most ordinary flowers, but those the choicest and

most odoriferous of their kind. Several of the sleeping rooms are over the public rooms. Formerly the beautiful young grand-duchesses occupied some of these upper chambers, and their little beds, hung with snow-white drapery, and the general arrangements of the apartments of corresponding simplicity, remain as of yore. But imagine that this fairy bower—this rose-covered cottage—this Imperial dwelling, replete with every luxury and every elegance—this Elysium, meet retreat for the celestial Psyche and her love, and every love, and every grace, contains one apartment so much the reverse of all the rest, that in comparison it resembles the penitential chamber of an ascetic. The principal feature in it is a small iron bedstead, upon which lies a thin mattress—some say of straw, others of horse-hair, but it is hard enough anyway—covered with green leather, and having a hard pillow of the same kind. A hard couch, stuffed and covered in like manner, a table and a few hard chairs, stuffed and covered *en suite*—over the back of one of which hangs an old military cloak*—and behold the bed-chamber

* This old cloak is a special favourite, and probably is in some way related to a cherished pair of slippers which the Empress embroidered for her Imperial husband in the second year of their marriage. These slippers have been in use ever since, and, as may be imagined, will now scarcely hold together. Many attempts have been made to supersede them in the Imperial estimation, but all to no purpose, and the tattered old favourites still hold office in spite of every effort to displace them.

of the Imperial Tzar! Another apartment of great interest is the Emperor's sanctum, library, or "look-out house," for here, without leaving the room—which is an upper one, facing the gulf—His Majesty can give his orders to the fleet, being provided with speaking-trumpet, telegraph, telescope, &c.

Here the amiable Tzarina spends the mornings among her flowers, tending them herself with much skill and care.

At noon, if neither reviews nor military manœuvres intervene, the Emperor drives the Empress through the shady park, which in most places is impervious to the sun's rays. After dinner the Tzar drives his "staroocha," or "old woman," as he lovingly calls her, to inspect some improvement completed, or project in contemplation, and not unfrequently astonishes her with some elegant or sentimentally-devised surprise.

On one such occasion, a few years ago, the Imperial pair were driving through the Empress's Park, when her Majesty was surprised to perceive a piece of ornamental water, where no such embellishment previously existed. She looked again, and behold a beautiful little island floated on its surface! and, still more surprising, this charming islet was clothed with tall shrubs in rich bloom, and full-grown trees! What did it all mean? Could it be a dream or enchantment?

It was difficult to believe it a reality, for but a short period before, her Majesty had passed by that same place, and wild trees of the forest stood in countless numbers on the very spot now occupied by the picturesque scene before her. The Tzar invited her to alight, and entering a light, fairy-looking boat, which lay moored near by, the Emperor ferried her across to the enchanted ait, which they entered by a narrow pathway, bordered with the Tzarina's favourite flowers, and overhung by the feathery foliage of the dwarf acacia, Siberian honeysuckle, &c. Following the winding course of the pathway up a gentle acclivity, the Tzarina beheld an elegant temple, or dome, of rich iron work, supported on graceful pillars, encircled by rare creepers; and beneath this dome, embowered amidst the most beautiful blossoms of the choicest exotics, reposed a bust of herself! The Tzarina cast one look at the dedication, "To the joy of my life," which was inscribed in Russ on the pedestal, and seizing the hand of the Tzar, was conveying it to her lips, when he clasped her in his arms.

In the evenings, accompanied by some of their children, the Emperor and Empress take tea at one or other of the numerous fancy summer-houses which are scattered around the little town, and contribute largely to its embellishment; after which the Imperial party drive home to their

cottage, several versts distant, in the delicious cool of a brilliant Russian sunset.

But to return to our drive in the park. We have passed "Mon Plaisir," where the Tzar, when at Peterhof, may be seen every morning at nine o'clock, taking his solitary walk along the shores of the Gulf, sometimes prolonging it to the extremity of the Imperial pier, and back to the "cottage" on foot—and thence making a wide *detour*, we perceived at the end of the avenue, considerably in advance of us, something resembling the form of a female figure draped in white. This is the famous pyramid fountain, formed by five hundred pipes of various sizes, and which some dear little English children I know call the "White Lady."

Then we come upon the Chinese fountain, a broad stream rushing down over a precipitous chequered pavement, and guarded by hideous dragons, all eyes and tail. And here we find ourselves in a kind of "Baron Bradwardine" fancy garden of shrubs clipped into the quaintest devices.

But, to resume our way to the "Cabane." Winding up a steep serpentine drive, we gained the terrace-road above, and still ascending, proceeded at a flying gallop over the well-kept macadamized roads of the village—for streets they can scarcely be called—where feathery foliage,

overhanging handsome cast-iron rails, forms the pleasing perspective; the datches, with the gay-coloured flags of their seigneurs floating from their highest turrets, retiring behind amongst the trees, lawns, and flower-beds. On, on, at the same flying speed, the whirling panorama presented us with hasty glimpses of camp, church, and palace, datch and cottage, till skirting the margin of the English Park, where is a pheasantry, several specimens of native eagles, a rabbit-warren, and about a dozen head of deer, we suddenly emerged into obscurity, under cover of a thick *bosquet*, through which meandered a crystal brook, in some places side by side with the road we traversed, at others gliding away beneath rustic bridges of lady-birch, by the aid of which we overleaped it.

The rush of a cascade succeeded to the gurgle of the brook, and the broad daylight to the twilight shade, and we had entered the territory of a living enchanter, the arch magician of the bewitching Peterhof, at whose bidding the waters were separated from the land, and from out a mighty swamp, where, but a few years bygone, the officers stationed at Peterhof hunted the elk, the fairest garden uprose, covering the earth with flowers, and shrubs, and shady walks, and drives, and intersected with tiny lakes, whereon floated islands covered with velvet lawns and flower-beds,

so arranged that they look like Persian carpets, extending to the water's edge, where gondolas of white and gold, with crimson velvet coverings overspread, wait at the service of the Imperial party. And there are floating-bridges that a breath might waft along, which conduct the stranger to these fairy isles, on several of which are Italian villas, replete with masterpieces of statuary, and objects of virtu, and the grounds adorned with fountains and choice plants.

Cottages of every clime present themselves in the most picturesque situations, and even artificial ruins, of mellowed time-worn hue.

These *bijoux* are the tea-bowers of the Imperial family. We had gained the side of a diminutive lake, fringed with willows, some drooping in graceful curves into the water, others arranged so as to form plumes overhanging the road. At the further end of this lake was the cottage of a Russian peasant, built of the peeled trunks of trees, laid one above another, kept together by a kind of dove-tail fixture, leaving several inches of the round ends to project beyond the wall line on all sides, and thus forming a kind of *chevaux-de-frise* at the four corners. Approaching nearer, I perceived that the brass-bound windows were of plate-glass, that green-house plants filled the window-sills, and that the woodwork of the balconies and overhanging eaves, with their long lappet

ends, were perforated and "Vandyked" in patterns like lace-work. The shutters, too, usually of the most gaudy green and vermeil, were painted in more delicate colours.

Another lake, exceeding the former in size and beauty, stretched out before, being thus situated on an isthmus between two, the larger one in front, the smaller extending longitudinally behind. Refinement and order were everywhere apparent.

A bull-dog-looking veteran, with silver locks and iron-grey moustache, a row of medals on his breast, and the stripes of a corporal on the sleeve of his military surtout, rose, as we passed, from a bench near a smaller building attached to the larger by a *porte-cochère;* a turn in the avenue here revealed a full length view of our unpretending little domicile, retiring into a background of trees; its large bay windows and balcony above, its overhanging roof and rustic porch, and numerous half-open casements, reflected in many a quivering line of light and shade on the glassy surface of the clear blue lake.

Crossing a wooden bridge, suspended over the stream which supplied our "lake" from the numerous lakes above, a few thumps and bumps, and threatened overturnings in the mountainous clay ruts of our unmade road, and we were safely located in our charming "cabane," the first occupants of its yet scarcely dry walls, and the prime-

val dwellers in that newly-reclaimed suburb of the little Peterhof world.

A few days saw us comfortably settled, and all our interior arrangements complete.

And now the garden had to be arranged, and the exterior of the "cabane" to be adorned with creepers, and the balconies with plants; but in this we were stayed by the announcement that it still required another and finishing coat of paint, and that, as the wishes of the "Kaiser" were necessary on the subject, nothing could be done until his arrival, which was, however, daily expected.

What the Imperial Autocrat of all the Russias, Nicholas Paulovitch, could possibly have to do with a dwelling so humble as ours was, to me at least, a matter of considerable surprise, but the solution of the mystery was at hand.

It would appear that the owner of the "cabane" is a descendant of one of a body of Swiss settlers.

Our colonist's family lived formerly in a suburb of Peterhof, nearer to St. Petersburg; but the Kaiser thinking the present *locale* a fitting and likely spot for a colony, selected the shrewd and clever little David as its founder, calling it "Nicholsky," after himself, and, at the same time, giving him a sum of money, wherewith to build a house for himself and family, and another larger and less substantial, to let out during the summer to visitors from the capital. David was

at first averse to his removal, urging with the Kaiser his certainty that the situation was too remote from Peterhof to obtain a tenant, and that the nature of the newly-reclaimed land was anything but encouraging for agricultural purposes. "Let us try, David," was the Kaiser's laconic reply, and the result has proved His Majesty in the right. At this moment, the fields in David's allotment promise a bountiful yield, and the Countess had been but a short time his tenant, when he let it for a term of years.

This "cabane" was, therefore, one of the many objects of the Tzar's own planning and design, and thus it was that, until the arrival of the imperial architect, no one could say what was to be done.

Day after day passed away, but still the Emperor came not. Rumour had long since affirmed that, ere now, Peterhof was to have been the scene of much gaiety from the anticipated visit of the Emperor of Austria, the Prince of Prussia, and several Princes of Germany, in honour of whom there were to be illuminations, reviews, balls, and *fêtes* innumerable. The gay villagers had, therefore, been for weeks on the *qui vive* of expectation. At length an imperial salute was heard booming from the Gulf, and every tongue exclaimed, "'Tis the Emperor!" But not yet. It was the Cesarevitch, however, whose visits to this charm-

ing place "are few and far between." His Imperial Highness is said to prefer Tzarskoë-Celo and Pavlovsky. But the Grand Duke Alexander had a specific object in view by honouring us on the present occasion.

CHAPTER XX.

Object of the Grand Duke's Visit to Peterhof—Young V—— and His *Escapade*—The Tzar in our Kitchen—The Cook's Extreme Amazement—The Emperor Apologizes to the Ladies—The Imperial Coachman—How He was Punished—Ball at Vauxhall—The Emperor and the Peasants—The Imperial Party and Distinguished Foreign Visitors.

THE Emperor still prolonged his stay in Germany, whither he had gone to reconduct the Empress to her home; therefore, on the broad manly shoulders of the Nasledenick devolved the responsible care of his fatherland during the temporary absence of his Sire. Now the military encamped around Peterhof, thinking the present a favourable opportunity to relax in their rigid duties, had, on more occasions than one, benefited by the absence of those vigilant eyes of the Kaiser, which nothing escapes, even to a button missing from a cadet's jacket.

The Grand Duke, *l'heritier*, therefore, well knowing the *escapades** perpetrated by some of

* Strict though he was, to the very letter of the law, yet the late Grand Duke Michael enjoyed an act of witty daring on the part of the young officers, and though sometimes attended by a wide breach of discipline, he has been known to pass it over with but trivial punishment. Few there were, even among the wild and daring spirits who annually emerge from the schools to the promotion of "one star" rank, to tiny epaulets, swords, and spurs—and time and will for any wild scheme—sufficiently bold to brave the Grand Duke's frown. There was one, however, whose freaks served the Prince with an exciting change from the dull monotony of dooming to arrest for the petty offence of long hair, long spurs, or buttons loose. Young V—— scorned such childish misdemeanours; his pranks were dashing and bold, and conducted with so much humour and frankness that he rarely met detection or punishment. The following is one of his multitudinous escapades, which the late Grand Duke relished exceedingly.

V—— belonged to a squadron of Lancers, one of the smartest guard regiments, whose head-quarters, summer and winter, were at Peterhof. In the winter, this summer paradise is dreary in the extreme; therefore it is scarcely surprising that the officers in command there are besieged with applications from their subalterns for leave to visit the gay capital so enticingly near. V——'s engagements in St. Petersburg were extremely numerous, and having long since expended his oft repeated "leaves," he no longer troubled Count N——, his commanding officer, with applications, but took "French leave," and visited the capital continually. On one of these expeditions he had just entered St. Petersburg, when he beheld the Grand Duke Michael meeting him at right angles, in the great Plaine d' Isaac, but at a considerable distance. They passed, and V—— hoped he had done so unperceived; he looked back, and to his dismay, saw that the Prince had changed his course, and, woe be to him, that his horses' heads were directed to Peterhof! Accustomed to contingencies of the kind, V——, without a moment's hesitation, followed the Prince till within a convenient

the Peterhof detachments under the immediate surveillance of that most rigid of disciplinarians and noblest-hearted of men, his lamented uncle, the late Grand Duke Michael, whose place as Commander-in-Chief he now holds, had determined to take them by a surprise, and as the malicious fates had willed it, just as the Grand Duke landed at the Imperial jetty, a party of officers, bound on a pleasure excursion up the Neva, having hired a steamboat for the day, were at the same moment starting from the pier a hundred yards distant. Of course, to put back was but the work of an instant, and leaping into the vehicles

distance, then slipping from his sledge, he gathered up the long skirts of his military manteau, and after a smart run for it, succeeded in overtaking the imperial *calèche*. Jumping up behind, he seated himself comfortably on the foot-board, ever and anon hearing the Grand Duke urging his coachman to make all haste, feeling sure he had caught the defaulter at last. They proceeded thus, till within a short distance of Count N——'s residence, whither the Prince was bound, when V—— leaped from his hiding place, and by a short cut succeeded in getting there before the Grand Duke, who could scarcely credit the evidence of his senses, on alighting from his carriage, to receive a salute from V——, who, some paces in advance of him, stood cool and collected, as if he had been stationary there for hours. "Ha, sir! how is this? I saw you but an hour since in the streets of St. Petersburg," said the Chief, somewhat sternly. "But your Imperial Highness sees me here. How can that be possible?" replied V——, nothing daunted: "Come, come now," continued the Prince in an undertone, and drawing nearer, "*entre nous*, just tell me how you got down here?" "Oh, in that case, with pleasure," replied V——, "the equipage of your Imperial Highness performed the friendly service for me.

nearest, they flew off in all directions to their stations situated in different parts of the town.

The Grand Duke, however, had the advantage by a few seconds, and although several succeeded in gaining their quarters before the "Travoga" or "call to arms" was sounded, the majority were doomed to arrest.

A few days after this event I was contemplating the arrangement of some flowers on the balcony of an upper room, when an electric "Was? Was ist das?" made me start, and, looking down, I beheld an officer in the undress uniform of the Empress' guards interrogating the child of David on the whereabouts of her father. Obtaining nothing satisfactory from the little girl, he himself went in pursuit, entering the yard by the *porte-cochère*, which separated David's winter snuggery from our summer bower. It was the long looked-for Kaiser come at last!

Hurrying downstairs to inform my friends of the near proximity of so illustrious a visitor, I was just in time to see His Majesty leave our kitchen, followed by all the astonished domestics, who stood in a group gazing after him.

It is impossible to describe the cook! But recently from the country, he had, for the first time, just looked upon his sovereign — that being next to God, whom he had been taught to venerate in his first uttered prayer. There he stood,

a knife in one hand, a half peeled-turnip in the other, his mouth wide open, his eyes strained to their utmost tension, and, surmounting all, a high white calico cap, which he had forgotten to remove; notwithstanding sundry notices to that effect in the shape of winks and pinches from his more sophisticated companions. But Arcentyou gazed on, heedless of aught save the vision he had seen, as if expecting its return. When at length returning animation restored to him the use of his legs and tongue, he strode musingly back to his stove, muttering as he went, "Slavnoë! Slavnoë!" * This simple and significant tribute to the Tzar's Jupiter-like majesty of person is, perhaps, the most flattering he could receive, for, unattended, in an undress, and devoid of any insignia of high station, so imposing to a vulgar mind, the simple-minded serf was perfectly satisfied with the majesty of the "man," no doubt thinking that God had thus qualified him to be the Tzar and father of all true Russians. Hastily crossing the yard, the Kaiser with a bound cleared the three or four steps leading up to the corridor of David's still unfinished abode, where His Majesty found the little man he sought. Having given his orders, enquired about the welfare of his family individually, and rallied him on his incredulity respecting the fate of his cottage, the Tzar

* Literally—"Glorious, glorious."

passed out through the front entrance, *vis-à-vis* to our portico. This, the morning resort of our party, one reading aloud while the others were engaged in fancy work or drawing, was thus occupied when the Emperor appeared on the opposite landing. Descending a step or two, His Majesty saluted us, at the same time rapping his spurs together, an affability, it is said, and addressed to the party at large an apology for what he was pleased to call his intrusion into our kitchen! pleading his ignorance that David had yet let his house, as, prior to our coming, the colonist had been accustomed to dwell in that particular part of it. Hence the reason of the Tzar's proceeding thither forthwith. His Majesty concluded by expressing a hope that none of the party would experience any ill effects from occupying the house ere it was quite dry. Bowing and adding a condescending "bon jour," the only French words he made use of, having spoken in Russ, he stepped into his droschkii, which awaited him on the rutty road to the end of which (I hope we may be pardoned) we watched the handsome Kaiser borne along in his light equipage, which was skilfully navigated by a perfect Hercules of a coachman, but who, notwithstanding all his care, had nearly deposited his sovereign in one of the clay ruts, for the droschkii with its precious freight looked somewhat like a ship in a storm, now surmounting the wave

and now sinking into the valleys between, till, gaining the wooden bridge, the hoofs of the spirited horse resounded thereon at a thundering pace, and soon after the little white horse-hair foraging cap (the only object in the distance discernible about the Tzar) was seen whirling along through the winding avenues at an incredible speed.

This Herculean "Jehu" of the Tzar's is an old favourite, and one who has driven His Majesty for many years. Some time since he brought upon himself a well-merited touch of the Imperial displeasure. Driving the Emperor one day in St. Petersburg, a poor yesvosgick came in contact with the droschkii, but so slight was the collision that his Imperial master had not even remarked it. The coachman, however, exasperated at what he considered an insult, took note of his number, *en passant*, and on his return to the palace gave it in charge to the police, and the yesvosgick was dragged off to prison.

Several days after, when the police charges were being disposed of, an officer waited upon the Emperor to know His Majesty's pleasure respecting the yesvosgick in custody by his orders. The astonished Tzar replied that he had never given any such, and immediately instituted an enquiry, whereupon it appeared that the irritated coachman had taken the law into his own hands. The

Tzar ordered him to depart immediately for "Tzarskoë-Celo," or Tzar's land or estate, there to groom the horses in the Imperial stables till further notice. About six months after this, the Tzar, thinking his old favourite had been sufficiently punished, drove down to Tzarskoë-Celo, and on getting into his carriage to return to St. Petersburg, ordered his old servant to drive him home.

The morning after the Kaiser's visit saw our "cabane" the centre of an animated scene. The painters were at work, and fifty of the Emperor's labourers levelled the clay ruts. Picturesque groups, with flowing beards, sandalled feet, dignity of mien, and beauty of countenance, more akin to the sages of old than to modern stone breakers, sat round blocks of Finnish granite, breaking them up into small pieces, which other troops of Grecian sages carried off in primitive receptacles, resembling hand-barrows, to spread as a foundation upon the newly created road.

And now, the whole of Peterhof is astir — the Imperial Family are in Russia—the Tzar has returned to his children, and the Tzaritza to her cottage home, and her flowers in the wood at Alexandra; and in a few days the Imperial pair will take up their abode for the season at this much-loved retreat.

Something like the amusements anticipated are

at length about to be realised. Reviews, military manœuvres, balls, national fêtes, and the inauguration of the newly-erected "Vauxhall," by a series of balls and lotteries for charitable purposes, under the immediate patronage of the Tzar, Tzarita, and the Imperial family, present a prospect of more than ordinary interest to these Northern pleasure-seekers, whose greatest enjoyment of life appears to be *pour s'amuser*.

The indefinite nature of this new entertainment, under the head of "Vauxhall," so far staggered the matrons of this aristocratic community that they put a peremptory veto to their daughters' attendance, while the young ladies, smitten with the novelty, and goaded on to rebellion by the inflammatory reports of brothers and beaux, who pronounced it to be the best thing of the season, had determined, *nolens volens*, to go. Probably some rumour of this revolutionary state of social affairs had penetrated to head-quarters, for elucidatory programmes, with tickets accompanying, were forwarded by the directors to the refractory dames, which calmed the ruffled feelings both of mothers and daughters by the flattering honour conferred; for ladies tickets were only procurable by application to the directors, and then not by purchase, but favour.

For one of the first of these entertainments, and the most *distingué* of the season, it was our

good fortune to have tickets of invitation sent to us.

The hour named was eight, and the order for dress understood to be *negligé* and in bonnets, and as the invitation was of the usual short description, we had to make the most of the couple of days allowed us. A select committee was therefore convened, and the concentrated taste of the family on the all-important question at issue debated with closed doors. The debate ended, a footman might be seen running forth at the top of his speed to catch the first steamer for St. Petersburg, the return boat bringing him back, laden with numberless band-boxes, containing an accumulation of treasures, in the shape of flowers, feathers, and tulle, from the well-stored wardrobes in town. A dozen expert hands set to work, devouring scissors flashed slap-dash through snow-white pathless tracts of *poult de soie* and *tulle*, and bright needles darted meteor-like through immeasurable space.

Let it not be supposed that this remote Vauxhall on the shores of the Finnish Gulf, bears any other affinity than in name to our once far-famed gardens on the banks of the Thames, and indeed scarcely in this, for in the mouth of the foreigner it becomes more nearly allied to the cockney "Wauxhall." Almost all the summer resorts here have these "Vauxhalls," which, although they

differ materially from the original type, nevertheless possess some recognisable features, but in this one at Peterhof there is nothing of the kind. It is simply an establishment connected with the baths, like that of Boulogne, Ostend, or any other of the fashionable bathing towns on the French and Belgian coasts—places of re-union for the dancing, smoking, and news-reading public during the summer.

The establishment at Peterhof is a pretty Swiss cottage-style of house, surrounded by an ornamental garden, and close to the water side.

At the garden gate of this new erection we now alighted, and the first object which met the eye was the Tzar, in his never-to-be-mistaken white foraging cap and favourite undress uniform of the Empress' guard, towering a head at least above the surrounding crowd, that filled every path and commandable part of the garden. There had been a lottery in the afternoon for the benefit of the Patriotic Society of St. Petersburg, and amusements of various kinds having been devised to attract purchasers, the steamers from the capital brought down great numbers, who, it was expected, would return to town by the seven and eight o'clock boats; but having learned the fact that there was to be a ball, they stayed on, and had taken up strong positions in every available part of the ball-room, passages and corridors,

even clambering to the tops of the windows outside, so that within they presented a perfect study of heads and faces, full, half, and quarter; eyes of every shade, from the Sarmatian blue to the most piercing black; noses of every mould, rows of beautiful teeth, set off by chubby lips, or just seen through overhanging beards of black or nut-brown.

The Emperor and Empress had been here from an early hour, but judging by the hilarity of the Tzar, His Majesty seemed to be enjoying the festivity with as much *gout* as if just arrived. A troop of moujiks, in all the grace of their holiday attire, crowded round their "Gosoodar," or "Master," —the Tzar—singing and dancing to their heart's content, and the evident amusement of His Majesty, who, positively convulsed with laughter, displayed the whole range of his white teeth, as verse after verse of the air they sang called forth renewed applause.

Leaving the Tzar, we proceeded through a crowded balcony without, and an equally well-packed corridor within, to the ball-room, which, surrounded by a phalanx, not of fighting men, but of elbowing and pushing women, presented an impenetrable barrier to our progress. Finding it impossible either to advance or retreat, we patiently resigned ourselves to the vicissitudes of the moment, hoping some lucky chance might send in

our way some military friend bold enough to storm the line for us, amusing ourselves meanwhile by an analysis of such incidents as came within the narrow limits of our position. At one end of the ball-room was the music gallery, and on the opposite side, behind us, and in the corridor, through part of which we had just passed, and separated from the dancing-room only by a line of pillars, arose a stage, or succession of steps, covered with scarlet cloth, and reaching nearly to the ceiling. Upon these were arranged the lottery prizes, massive-looking ornaments of richly embossed gold and silver, tastefully relieved by antique vases and *corbeilles* of flowers, the whole surrounded by a forest of evergreens.

"Make way, the Empress comes," said several voices near, and the next moment the barrier opened, and the Tzaritza appeared leaning on the arm of her third son, the handsome, merry Grand Duke Nicholas, who conducted her Majesty towards the prizes. We had now no difficulty in proceeding, and had just gained commodious standing-room among some friends, when Marie Nicholaëvna, Grand Duchess of Leuchtenberg, the Emperor's eldest daughter, made her *entrée*, attended by her ladies and a gay train of *demoiselles d'honneur*. Her Imperial Highness was soon after joined by her brothers, the Grand Dukes Constantine and Michael, the Prince of Saxe, and

several distinguished Austrian, Prussian, and German visitors. The Empress, having looked at the prizes, now advanced up the centre of the room, looking about her right and left, and bowing, *en passant*, to several ladies in the crowd. Catching sight of three pretty sisters talking very earnestly together in the crowd, not having noticed the near proximity of the Tzarina, Her Majesty stepped aside, and tapping one of them gently on the cheek with her glass, said, "You were very late on horseback yesterday, be careful you do not take cold." She then approached the Tzar, who had just entered from without by one of the window-doors, near which he stood, with his little white "cap in hand," not willing to disturb the crowd by penetrating further into it. The Grand Duke Nicholas, master of the ceremonies for the evening, here delivered up his maternal charge to the care of the Tzar, and skipping off to the pretty trio before mentioned, gracefully demanded the hand of the youngest for the first *contredanse*.

All the members of the family present accompanied their majesties to the door of the ball-room, when the Grand Duchess Marie advanced towards her mother, and presented her fair forehead to the lips of the Empress, who impressed on it a kiss, and with a tender "Praschaï, Dushinka," or "good bye, dear," placed her arm within the Tzar's, and departed. This was the signal for

dancing to begin. The Grand Duchess, conducted by the Prince of Saxe, took her stand at the head of the room. Her brother, the Grand Duke Nicholas, with his pretty partner, as their *vis-à-vis*, and the whole of the court circle, composed of the ladies in actual waiting on the Empress and Grand Duchess, the foreign visitors, and the invited guests from the town, joining in the same quadrille.

The quadrille terminated with a spirited succession of "grande ronde," promenade, "chaine des dames," &c., several times repeated, the Grand Duke calling out the changes, and keeping up the spirit of the dance with Scottish-like enthusiasm. His Imperial Highness appeared thoroughly to enjoy it, and to inspire his partizans with something of his own ardour.

The Mazurka over, it is the custom in private families to pair off to the supper-room, but on the present occasion the Imperial family took leave, and the invited guests did the same, but a light supper was laid out in a tent in the garden for such as chose to remain.

CHAPTER XXI.

Sopsfenny—A Gem of Art—The Gem of Peterhof—La Moustache Grise Attacks the Barishnæ—The Barishnæ Petition the Tzar—Petition Granted Conditionally—A Dilemma—The Triumph—The Barishnæ Rowers, and the Tzar as Assistant—The Emperor and the Sleeping Peasant—The Tzar's Foot-race with the Doctor—Accident to the Emperor—Commencement of Last Illness.

To the Vauxhall *fête* succeeded that of blessing the colours of the nation, a couple of days after, and as the troops were still at the camp—manœuvres being suspended for the day—a smart body of cavalry cadets formed the guard of honour at the palace, in the garden at the back of which the ceremony comes off. The Imperial palace is a picturesque building, surrounded on all sides by fine old elms of the great Peter's time. Immediately behind it is a broad gravelled space,

where the Emperor occasionally reviews small detachments of soldiers, or miniature cadet corps, for the amusement of the Empress, who looks down upon the manœuvres from a covered balcony, open in front, and running the width of the main division of the building. Here, too, every evening, the *beau monde* resort, and the splendid bands of the *Garde à cheval* and Bréobréjensky regiments play from six to eight o'clock. The Imperial family attend frequently, and, like some of their subjects, finish the out-door amusements and exercises of the day by arriving in time for the Russian Evening Hymn, a most delicious composition, which is always the last air played, after which they repeat the Lord's Prayer, and disperse. All present stand uncovered, and if any of the male members of the Imperial family are in equipages, they alight immediately, and, cap in hand, so remain till it is finished. Beyond this promenade ground is a flower-garden, intersected by broad pathways, and, right and left of this, spacious avenues, overshadowed by the same veteran elms which stretch away into a transparent wood, and debouch at gates planted on the main highway of Peterhof. Between the flower-garden and the space where the wood commences, is a large basin, the reservoir of a fountain, in the midst of which stands Neptune, trident in hand, seemingly reading a lecture to the dolphins around,

which are looking up as if listening to him. On all sides but that of the flower-garden, the foliage of the old elms affords delightful shade, which was gratefully appreciated on the day in question, the ceremony taking place at noon.

From an early hour all the rank and beauty of Peterhof might be seen wending its way to the palace gardens. Streams of equipages of every description, from the straw-littered waggon, driven by the astute David, with his numerous progeny behind him, to the newest importation of carriage kind, the elegant blue enamelled phaeton and English harnessed greys of Mr. R——, the American Consul—the best foreign "whip," by the way, in these latitudes—all converging to the same point of attraction. At twelve o'clock the procession proceeded from the palace church—where prayers had been read—towards the basin of the fountain. First came His Excellency, the handsome General Galachoff, Grand Master of Police, followed by the priests, deacons, and court choristers, chaunting on their way. Then, the representatives of Church and State, followed in the persons of Tzar and Metropolitan, side by side. The former was in a General's full uniform, wearing the *cordon bleu*, and decorated with stars and orders, bearing his helmet in his hand. Grand, majestic, buoyant in all his movements, his Majesty presented a striking con-

trast to his Eminence. The venerable Metropolitan moved on with slow and unequal step, impeded not a little by the unyielding stiffness of the rich robes of silver tissue in which he was encased. He wore a high, round, turban-like mitre, thickly studded with large diamonds, which, on the slightest movement, surrounded his brow with an *auréole* of light, and his face being completely concealed behind a large gold cross which he carried, close pressed against his visage, produced the most mysterious effect. Next came the Heir Apparent and his wife, the latter taking the place of Her Majesty the Empress —who watched the ceremony through her opera-glass from the balcony—followed by the Grand Dukes and Duchesses, ladies in waiting, the Crown Princes of Prussia and of Saxe, and several Austrians of distinction, their suites, &c., &c., the Imperial Grand Dukes and Princes, wearing their *cordons*. All the officers were in full uniform, and displayed their decorations, and the ladies in full dress. And, bringing up the rear, considerably behind the rest, came a party of Austrians, reminding one of the archers of Robin Hood and Little John; but in lieu of "Lincoln green" these gentlemen sported surtouts of light blue, loose scarlet trowsers, and cocked hats with green feathers—a costume most unwarlike in appearance, but which was, nevertheless, an effective

auxiliary in a scene like the present, where every gay-coloured stripe tells with as much effect as bright blossoms in a bouquet of evergreens.

On reaching the fountain, the Metropolitan priests, deacons, and choristers took their stand on a carpeted stage, placed near the edge of the basin. On this stage was a reading-desk, covered with silver tissue, several standards, and a double row of colossal candlesticks, supporting enormous candles, which one of the priests kindled from the sacred flame of a consecrated taper brought from the ever-burning lamp in the church, and preserved in a lantern elevated on a pole, and which usually forms a prominent feature in all religious ceremonies. The Tzar, the Imperial family, and foreign visitors stood beneath a tent surrounding the stage, and were disposed in the same order as that in which they had arrived. The spectators, arranged round the spacious margin of the reservoir, presented, perhaps, the least interesting part of this imposing scene, but by no means the least picturesque. Here and there, at equal distances round the basin, stood the erect, immovable forms of innumerable Cossacks, like scarlet columns, their capitals surmounted by round, woolly, black turbans, their formidable aspect and warlike garb contrasting strangely with the slighter forms and light fanciful dresses of that "gathering" of

noble dames. Out burst the heavenly strains of "Gospodi Pomilui," or "Lord have mercy on us," upon which every Russian head bent low, and each devoutly crossed himself, and heads undulated backwards and forwards, and again the right arm of each was upraised, and with the tips of the thumb and two first fingers compressed—emblematic of the Holy Trinity—each made the sign of the cross on his breast. King, priests, and people, all there devoutly joined in the pious ceremony. The Metropolitan now advanced towards the basin, holding aloft the golden cross. A large silver vessel, resembling an enormous soup tureen, had been previously filled with the Neva water, and deposited in the reservoir. Into this the Metropolitan dipped the cross, and, withdrawing it in a horizontal position, poured the water thus collected on its surface into a golden cup held by a priest. Taking a small broom of sweet basil in one hand, and the golden cup in the other, amidst a fresh outburst of that celestial chant, and ascending clouds of incense, His Eminence dipped the twigs into the holy water, and in the form of a cross sprinkled the standards of Russia. The Metropolitan then advanced towards the Tzar, to whom he presented the golden cup. His Majesty dipped in his hand, and made the sign of the cross on his Imperial visage, after which he shook the venerable dig-

nitary heartily by the hand, and kissed him twice on one cheek and once on the other. The Grand Dukes presented themselves in succession, each dipping, crossing, bowing, and finishing the ceremony by kissing the hand of the Metropolitan.

The solemn "Gospodi Pomilui" had ceased. The Metropolitan and his conclave of priests and deacons had retired to the church, and the ladies, having taken part in the procession, to the balcony of the Empress, who, prior to their coming, had been joined by her lovely grandchildren, whose pretty faces were but just visible above the front of the balcony; and below this balcony was the Tzar, well mounted on a noble chestnut steed, and, standing one behind the other in order of seniority, were the Prince of Prussia and the Imperial Grand Dukes. All the different cadet corps passed in review, or "walked in ceremony," before their Majesties, who appeared highly satisfied with their performance, and, dismissing them to eat their bonbons,* His Majesty saluted the Empress, who rose and courtesied,—her sons and military visitors doing the same, when they all dismounted and followed the Tzar, who had by this time joined the Tzaritza and the ladies above, where sweetmeats

* Each cadet receives bonbons after every review.

and fruits were now handed by veritable white-turbaned Moors in rich oriental dresses.

The same evening the Emperor occupied his phaeton with Marie Nicholaëvna by his side, and drove round the "cabane" side of the "lac de fées." A detachment of sappers and miners from the manœuvres were returning by the road on the opposite side to their camp, about a verst further on, and a double row of willows, thick to the water's edge, of course prevented their seeing the Tzar, or His Majesty seeing them; he heard them, however. "My children," cried the Emperor, in a voice which no one could mistake for other than his. "Our Tzar," replied a thousand voices, with such a shout as should have been heard to be understood, and striking up a national and loyal air, they continued singing till they reached their camp.

Peterhof, the "Versailles of the North," was first used as a summer retreat by Peter the Great. Catherine II. appears to have been the next substantial patron of this pretty little place. On a natural terrace, which extends along the shores of the gulf for many versts, is a square brick house, called Sopsfenny. This was Catherine's first palace at Peterhof, built for her by Mr. Cazalet.*

* This gentleman presented Catherine II. with the first peach grown in Russia.

It is now the property of the Grand Duke Alexander, and externally wears almost the same appearance as it did in the days of his great grandmother, but, internally, what a mighty change! The walls of the principal apartments are hung with superb tapestry of Moscow manufacture. The Princes' cabinet is panelled with oak, most surprisingly carved. Doors, furniture, &c., are all the work of an unlettered peasant! The bath-room of the Grand Duchess is lined with mirror, having beautifully executed fresco paintings between the divisions and round the cornice of the ceiling, which is also of mirror. The little staircase and entrance-hall are also of carved oak, the seats of the hall chairs being covered with leather apparently peculiar to Russia, which is exceedingly soft in texture, and of a delicate fawn colour.

To English ideas this is, without an exception, the prettiest little model of house kind in the empire; the style throughout is English, even to the bed-rooms and attics, which are provided with iron, tent, and other bedsteads, curtained as we use them in England.

Could the Grand Duke's oak cabinet, or any part of it, have been transported to the London Exhibition of 1851, it must have evoked unqualified surprise and admiration, but in Russia, with the generality of visitors, such wonderful objects

scarcely evoke a remark, or even a second look, so completely are all classes, whether gentle or simple, armed with that extraordinary *nil admirari nonchalance*, which the most exquisite work of genius—except painting—appears to be incapable of disturbing.

But the Emperor Nicholas proved the best friend to this hitherto almost exclusively Imperial residence, by making it available for all classes of the nobility and foreign and native merchants. Its extension and embellishment were the peculiar study of the Tzar, during his six or eight weeks of annual summer vacation at this charming place. Here the Emperor relaxed into the quiet country gentleman, amusing himself in the superintendence of his small estate; driving out his wife and daughter; taking his walk before breakfast by the shores of the gulf, treading in the very footsteps of his great ancestor, Peter; or later in the day, among the wilder suburbs of Babygone—about two miles from Peterhof—leisurely surveying by himself the arena of some improvement in contemplation.

In our search after wild flowers among the thickets of this locality, we repeatedly come upon His Majesty suddenly among the meandering pathways. On one occasion, we found him measuring by paces the width of a particular portion of green-sward, upon which a picturesque

cottage soon after uprsoe; on another, we saw him on the roof scaffolding of a pretty mill-house which he had planned, and which was in course of construction; indeed, so often did we encounter him in our own immediate neighbourhood, that we were quite disappointed if a day passed without the customary *rencontre*. He had always a pleasant "bon jour" for us, and some passing remark suitable to the contingency of the moment. Moreover, we looked to him for especial protection against our arch enemy, the old soldier in charge of the Imperial tea cottage of Selsky-domic. The pond, or as we called it, *par excellence*, the "lac de fées,"—a piece of water covering about an English acre and a-half, upon the banks of which stood our rustic dwelling—was an object of extreme delight to our party in the delicious evenings, and midnights particularly — that brief period of translucent twilight, when the gorgeous splendour of the sun's setting hues almost fuse into the colder and clearer halo of his rising — enveloping this portion of our glorious world in a twilight so soft and enjoyable that we usually passed it on the bosom of the lake.

Probably, these pleasures were the more enhanced by triumph of conquest, for we had fought our way to them.

On our first arrival at the "cabane," one of the Barishnæ having suggested that a boat would be

a most agreeable adjunct to the lake, our "light bark" made its appearance soon after, and for some time one solitary rower was left to enjoy her excursions alone; but on perceiving that she was perfectly competent to manage the craft, the others took courage, and were soon *au fait* at the oar. Our explorations had hitherto been confined to our own end of the lake, but with increased numbers our spirits rose, and we actually accomplished an excursion to the other, or "Selsky domic," end of it.

But a most unlooked-for visitation awaited us there. Out rushed "*la moustache grise*," who regarded us for a moment with a most comical look of surprise, as if he thought we had dropped from the clouds. However, on ascertaining whence we came, and that we were veritable mortals like himself, amenable to, and punishable by, the same laws, he, with much gesticulation and wordy vehemence, informed us that we were trespassers, and further, that if ever he caught us there again he would tell the Tzar.

On our return home, we communicated with the colonist, who advised us to take no notice of him. We continued our excursions accordingly, but every visit to the domic by water brought the old man out upon us in a towering rage.

But the crisis was at hand. One evening, accompanied by two military friends, we had floated

beneath his very windows ere he made his appearance. He had been at his supper probably, and thus had not observed us till we were upon him, for out he rushed, with his mouth crammed full, and—though in the presence of two military men—with his coat off, gesticulating frantically, pottering up and down the beach, and working his arms about like an old-fashioned telegraph. We were all threatened—our military friends included—with the vengeance of the Tzar for the twentieth time.

"Why do you not ask the Emperor's permission," suggested one of our friends, "and prevent this annoyance?"

We took his advice, on the opportunity presenting itself, the very next day.

The Tzar was driving the Empress in a phaeton and pair, unattended even by a servant. Seeing one of the Barishnæ approach his carriage, His Majesty drew up, and attentively listened to the humble petition. He seemed much amused with the relation, and promised his sanction to our proceedings on the lake, on condition that the spokeswoman of the party would take the command of the boat, and guarantee him that neither herself nor her companions "should go to the bottom."

The Imperial back was scarcely turned when we repaired to the boat, all gaily rigged for the occasion, with the British Union Jack flying at

the bow, and the Russian tri-color at the stern, and made all haste up the lake to triumph over the corporal. As usual, he was out upon us with a repetition of the old story. It was now our turn to threaten him with the Tzar, and to tell him that we had his Imperial Majesty's permission to row there whenever we chose.

"Then show me your paper to that effect," returned the foe.

Here was a fix we had never anticipated! In short, he disregarded the whole story, came down in the night and hid our oars, and caused us so much alarm that we were almost afraid to go outside the front door, until interest was at length made through the Governor of Peterhof—who was made acquainted with the Tzar's wishes—to stay the old man's wrath. Although he was compelled to be passive thereafter, he always eyed us with a sullen expression of displeasure, and, by way of revenge, never touched his cap to either of us as we passed the "domic" on foot. We made "all right," however, before our departure, by a liberal contribution of tea-money, which ended in kissing hands and wiping off old disagreeables, for a Russian is seldom implacable long.

About a week after we had attained the Tzar's permission, we were standing deploring the helpless condition of our old boat, as she lay high and dry on a mud bank, the water which supplied our

lake having been cut off in consequence of excavations and blasting going on in a neighbouring pond, which was supplied by the same brook. The Emperor passed on the opposite side, and doubtless guessing at the cause of our regret from the pose of the party, he called across in French:—

"We have been obliged to dry up the pond, but it shall not be for long."

A day or two at most, saw us again in possession of a full supply of water, and the enjoyment of our customary boating parties, often with the Tzar for assistant, occasionally without seeing him, however, for the thick fringe of willows round one part of the lake hid pedestrians from our view, though they could see us; but it was impossible to mistake his "bravo, bravo," as the Barishnæ "pulled" along.

During the last severe visitation of cholera to Russia, Peterhof, as usual, escaped almost scathless, a few cases among the Crown peasants being almost the only ones. About fifty or sixty of these had for several days been engaged trenching near our "cabane." It is their custom to sleep for a couple of hours in the middle of the day, and the various attitudes in which they take their *siesta* is extremely droll; some lie stretched on their backs, with their caps on their faces; others on their faces, with their caps on the back of the

head; and some lie one upon another. One in particular had for some time arrested my attention from his uneasy-looking posture, being like that of a person suddenly seized with cramp while on his knees, and resting the forehead in agony on the ground. I was just about to send and ascertain if he was ill, when, from my balcony window, I noticed the Tzar picking his way over, and among, the sleepers in the direction of the scene of their labour. The peculiar position of the peasant in question attracted his attention, and, making a little *detour* to get at him, he took hold of the man by the shoulders, and lightly raising him so as to see his face, turned him gently back again, as a careful nurse would her sleeping charge. The man was fast asleep; he slightly moved, as if readjusting his arms, and continued his *siesta*, as little dreaming whose solicitude had been evoked in his behalf, as the Tzar himself that he had had an assistant to this act of intended benevolence.

From this same balcony window I was one morning witness to a curious pedestrian race between the Tzar and his medical attendant, Dr. Mandt. The doctor had recommended His Majesty to take a constitutional walk every day. The ground chosen was a long straight avenue, running by the side of an ornamental piece of water stretching from the rear of a pretty Italian

villa called "Pompeii," which the Tzar had built for the Empress, in commemoration of her renewed health after a visit to Italy, and which is ornamented with beautiful *frescoes* of all those places in that classic land best known to the Imperial family. The Tzar and the Doctor entered the avenue, walking slowly, like two friends engaged in some deeply-interesting conversation; they both stopped suddenly, and, after a second or two, as suddenly started off at a rapid rate. For a hundred yards or so the competitors kept pretty equal, but after that, the Emperor, though considerably the heavier man, gradually gained on his adversary, and reached the goal several paces in advance of the Doctor.

Soon after this, the Emperor lost his only remaining brother, which affected him so much that in the course of a few days a remarkable change was observable in his personal appearance. This was soon after followed by an accident which shook him seriously. Entering the *salon* of one of his great nobles, on the occasion of a *fête*, his foot caught in the carpet, and in his efforts to save himself from falling, he twisted his side. From this he suffered for a long period. Just after the accident, his medical attendant urged upon him the necessity of keeping quiet for a few days, but on the third day after, he was driving about, though with his military cloak on—it was

summer—and, very unusual for him even in cold weather, with the collar of it drawn up.

It was about this time, or soon after, that he requested as a favour that the inhabitants of Peterhof would order their coachmen to drive with caution round corners or angles, both of which are numerous in that pretty locality. This was the more remarkable, as his own speed had hitherto been so fleet, therefore betokening a state of physical suffering until now quite foreign to that frame of iron. I was particularly struck by the change in the personal appearance of the monarch at this time, an absence of three years in England having intervened since I had seen him last at Peterhof, when he was in his usual robust health. He soon after rallied, however; his fine constitution again triumphed; but repeated shocks lay prostrate the strongest, and that fatal one was at hand from which he never recovered.

The Crimean war supervened, and that blow, struck by the hand which the Emperor had so long grasped in alliance and friendship, must have fallen heavily indeed!

In the midst of the harass and anxiety attendant on the conduct of the war, the Empress became so alarmingly ill that for some time her dissolution was momentarily expected. Undoubtedly the most prominent feature in the character of the Emperor Nicholas was devotion to this cherished wife,

"the joy of his life." The Imperial family were residing at the Palace of Gatchina. The Tzar, overwhelmed with grief at the dangerous state of his consort, and with solicitude about the war, was unable to rest, and sleep entirely forsook him for a time. It was at this epoch that those around him remarked with dismay the sudden thinness to which he had become a prey, and the general great change in his personal appearance.

Alluding to the anxiety caused him by the state of affairs in the Crimea, followed by the alarming illness of the Empress, the Tzar exclaimed:—

"*C'etait le dernier coup qui m'a achévé.*"

CHAPTER XXII.

Prophetic Warning of Doctor Mandt—Last Illness and Death of the Emperor Nicholas—Emancipation of the Serfs—Russian Opinion of the British before and after the War.

THE last illness and death of the Emperor Nicholas are described in the following words to me by one who was near the august sufferer during the whole of that trying period, and whose words I translate literally.

"Three weeks before the death of the Emperor, Dr. Mandt told the Grand Duchess Marie that, if His Majesty was not careful, he would have an attack of paralysis of the lungs. The fact but too surely verified the words of the physician. The first week in Lent, the Tzar performed His devotions with the Imperial family. On Friday in this week they always partook of the sacra-

ment; but on Thursday evening the Emperor felt so unwell that he was unable to assist at the service in the chapel, or to communicate with his family. Subsequently, however, his ailment showed signs of amelioration, and at length ceased to cause the least apprehension; the Emperor resumed his usual avocations and his exercise on horseback, in spite of the expostulations of the physicians, and it was at this time that he rode so imprudently in the riding-school, which served to renew the attack.

"The incessant uneasiness, caused by the state of affairs in the Crimea, contributed to exaggerate the Tzar's malady; he passed his nights without sleep. The arrival of a courier was fatal to him, for it was at that period when the attack on Sevastopol was telling so fearfully on its brave defenders; the sufferings of the soldiers fretted the sorrowful heart of the Emperor; one of his most characteristic traits being the sincere and profound love he bore his country and people.

"This long-continued moral tension explains the rapid inroad made by the disease on a constitution so robust as was that of the Emperor.

"It was not until the 29th of February that the physician in attendance began to despair of his life.

"'Am I in danger?' demanded the Emperor of Dr. Mandt; 'tell me the whole truth.' Reading an affirmative reply in the countenance of his

physician, he continued, 'Then send for Bajanoff.'

"Bajanoff, the confessor of His Majesty, was so much overcome, on entering the chamber of the Tzar, that he was unable to hide his emotion from him whose spiritual director he had been for so many years, until recalled to a sense of his duty by the perfect serenity and calmness of his august master, he was thus encouraged to proceed.

"After the Confession, the Empress and the Heir Apparent came to partake of the Last Supper with the Tzar. When he had finished, his fine countenance beamed with a heavenly expression, and he exclaimed with much fervour:—'Maintenant j'espére que Dieu me recevra dans le sein de sa miséricorde.'

"His religious duties ended, the Emperor blessed his children and grandchildren, thanked his wife for the uniform happiness she had afforded him, and recommended her to the care of the young Empress. He spoke in friendly council to his grandsons, who, unable longer to control their feelings, were obliged to leave the room. All the measures relative to his interment, and the manner in which his death was to be announced to the inhabitants of Moscow, were all minutely entered into; nothing was omitted by him. This proves the perfect calm enjoyed by this great soul in the last moments of its connection with the body.

"Among his parting words to his eldest son

were the following:—'I deeply regret leaving thee the empire surrounded by circumstances so sad and painful.' Not one member of his household was forgotten in his touching adieux. The Counts Adlerberg and Dolgorookie received from him expressions of affection and regard;—even his *valets de chambre* were remembered.

"To the very last moment of his life, the salient point of his affections was the profound and delicate tenderness which he testified towards the Empress, and which appeared to dominate all other emotions of this supreme moment. He thanked Madame Rohrbeck* for the care she had always evinced towards his consort, and begged her to continue her solicitude.

"At the request of the dying Tzar, the Empress repeated to him the Lord's Prayer; at the words, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,' he exclaimed with deep emphasis of resignation, 'Yes, always, always, and everywhere.'

"About nine o'clock, young Prince Menchikoff, the courier from the Crimea, arrived with despatches; but the Emperor would not see him, saying that he 'had now done with the affairs of this life.' At this time his strength visibly diminished, and the young Empress was summoned to the death-bed. Taking her eldest son by the hand, she led him to the little *cabinet de travail*

* First lady in waiting.

of the Tzar, where they had provisionally laid him, saying, 'Come and see how an Emperor of Russia ought to die.'

"The Empress-mother, weak and overwhelmed with grief, lay extended upon a couch by the bedside of her dying husband. In the agony of her sorrow, she cried out, 'Oh, why wilt thou leave us? I must go with thee!' To which the Emperor replied, among the very last words he was able to utter, 'Il faut que tu vives pour etre le *tien* de ceux qui restènt.'

"His breathing now became difficult, but in these, the bitterest moments of his agony, the Tzar was as composed and resigned as at its commencement. Holding in one hand the hand of his wife, and in the other that of his eldest son, he gazed alternately on the beloved features of each, and appeared to pray mentally.

"Around the bed of death knelt his weeping children and grandchildren, prostrate with sorrow at the contemplation of this agonizing struggle of life against death, the more painful from the perfect composure with which the august sufferer bore this last anguish, for speech now failed him; and with the hands of those cherished ones—those two necessarily dearest of all, for they especially had peculiarly shared his joys and sorrows—fondly locked in his, his eyes continued to rest upon them, and thus his spirit took its flight.

* * * * * * *

"About one o'clock in the morning of the day on which the Emperor Nicholas died, his physicians enveloped his feet in sere-cloth. This had been found efficacious in attacks of gout; but the heat thus produced inconvenienced the Tzar so much that it was removed. Doctor Mandt advocated bleeding, but this was negatived, as the complication of ailments from which the Emperor suffered rendered the choice of treatment for the one overwhelming malady of which he died very difficult; as that which would have allayed inflammation would have been fatal to gout, to which complaint the Emperor had long been subject.*

"Among the last incidents of the Tzar's last moments was the following:—The young Empress had been very ill, and her medical attendant had proscribed kneeling. Seeing his daughter-in-law among the kneeling weepers at his bedside, the dying Emperor, remembering this prohibition, made a sign—for he was already speechless—that she was to rise."

In the little *cabinet* where the Tzar died, is preserved a little carpet, much worn, upon which he knelt at morning and evening prayer, for the last thirty years of his life. Here also are the dressing-gown—a military cloak—and those treasured

* This explains the hesitation of the medical men, and their conflicting opinions.

slippers worked by the Empress, before alluded to, worn to shreds.

By those who knew him best, the late Tzar is described as a man who was deeply imbued with the great truths of religion. He made no showy exhibition of his faith, but before performing his devotions at the different seasons of fast, he prepared himself by that humility most acceptable to God, in asking forgiveness of those with whom he came in daily contact for any wrong or supposed wrong that he might have offered to them. But the essence of his religion was best seen in his toleration of other creeds—in that protection which he extended and the immunities he granted to their teachers and professors throughout his dominions. Even the British dissenters are satisfied in this respect. One of their pastors, a very superior and worthy man, told me, in strongly-emphasized terms, that the protection and privileges extended to his congregation, and even to himself as a Christian pastor, by this Emperor, for the long period of a dozen years, deserved the most unqualified praise.

"The late Tzar showed a rare moderation in that protection also which he never ceased to extend to the foreign residents in his dominions, to the French and British particularly; yet, in spite of this, he frequently received injurious libels and grievous caricatures—*des caricatures*

sanglantes—addressed to him through the post-office. These he read with the utmost *sang froid*, sometimes smiling as he communicated them to the Empress; and although he knew whence some of these emanated, his silent contempt was probably the best punishment he could inflict on their authors."

If we want to know what the Emperor Nicholas has done for his country and people, we must consult the progress of events in Russia for years to come. The dying Tzar knew that he bequeathed to his son a throne—with one exception perhaps—the most consolidated in Europe, for in 1848, when the oldest monarchies of the Continent were shaken to their foundations, Russia stood firm as a rock. And by whose unremitting, steady, gradual, and progressive agency was this brought about? It is true the Tzar left the empire embroiled in an unequal warfare, but he found it in revolt.

He knew also, what it has cost him to sacrifice for ever, upon the altar of public duty, the peaceful joys of his happy domestic life, to ascend that throne which its rightful heir had refused—yielding at length, more overcome by the voice of his angelic mother than by the entreaties of one brother or the commands of the other. Though still reluctant, exclaiming as he ascended to that exalted seat where the two Vladimirs, and the

mighty Yaroslav, and the noble Michael Romanoff, and the great Peter, had sate before him, "Whether does he who accepts, or he who refuses, a throne, make the greater sacrifice?"

But having acccepted the conditions of this sacrifice, his whole reign was a dedication of his great abilities to the promotion of his country's welfare, "and to the fulfilment of those objects contemplated by Alexander I. for the happiness of Russia," most prominent among which was that monarch's long-cherished project of emancipating the serfs. In furtherance of the grand design, the late Tzar laboured unremittingly from the commencement of his reign to its close, not by any palpable or showy change in the external condition of the class, but by the gradual annihilation of the master's power over his bond-man, by the destruction, one after another, at distant intervals, of those moral and mental ligatures which bind the serf to his master more effectively than fetters of iron. At the demolition of these, the late Tzar laboured, with his determined will and steady progressive purpose, during the greater portion of his life; thinking not of the reward *now*, in this world, but of the glory in ages to come, when generations, yet unborn, shall sing like joyous birds of that freedom bequeathed to them by their great Tzar Nicholas—and of the Judgment in

the world hereafter—when the faithful servant shall "enter into the joy of his Lord."

Doubtless reflections such as these contributed to that serenity and composure so remarkable in the last moments of the Tzar's life—calm, lucid, and sublime to its very close. For he died forgiving his enemies, and asking forgiveness of all.

"La fin couronne les œuvres."

* * * * * * *

With the energy of youth and hope stimulating the fine sympathies of his noble nature, Alexander II. of Russia has inaugurated his accession to the throne of his fathers by the most sublime resolve that can animate the heart of man! viz; the emancipation from bondage—whether it be moral or physical—of his fellow-men. Serfdom is an institution equally depressing and degrading to the master as to his bond-man; and although the prominent features of serfdom in Russia are unlike, and much more liberal than, such institutions have been elsewhere, nevertheless it is a remnant of the dark ages, and totally unworthy of a great and progressive country like Russia, or of a warm-hearted, liberal people like the Russians. Besides which, it is an institution that impedes the freedom of action both of master and man;—a stumbling-block in the path of progress. No public act, since the days that the great Vladimir brought

his thousands to be baptised in that Russian Jordan, the Dnieper, will so materially tend to the elevation of the nation, or to the development of its colossal resources, as the liberation of that small fraction of her people tied down by unnatural bonds.

The magnanimous Monarch who has voluntarily undertaken this Herculean task needs the kindest encouragement from freedom's *braves* all over the world, their earnest prayers and inspiriting praise, to cheer him on. And shall Britain, the champion of freedom and the defender of the oppressed, be slow to honour this hero in her favourite cause? Surely not. Let her free-born sons then be the first to hold out the right hand of freedom's fellowship to their old foes, but older allies, and by expressions of sympathy and appreciation of the noble undertaking in which all in that distant land are concerned and engaged, blot out the feelings of hostility which the Russians, high and low, at present entertain towards us. With the lower orders, the late war had its own ruthless tale to impress upon thousands and tens of thousands of bereaved ones, who never heard the name of England, until it reached them laden with the great grief that she had cost them all they held dear on earth! Unfortunately, a hundred years shall pass away ere these wrongs shall be forgotten by this tenacious fraction of the nation.

In addition to bereavements, the higher classes complain of other wrongs inflicted by us on them, for in speaking of the present feeling of the Russians towards us, the same high authority who supplied me with the details of the late Emperor's death, says:—

"Among the enlightened public, and that portion of it who study politics, the tendency is decidedly hostile to England. They admire the British as a nation, in themselves; but they do not like the external policy of Britain. They recognize the genius of the people, but entertain no sympathy for them. These sentiments have been considerably augmented since the late war.

"The irritation of the Russians against the English has moreover been much provoked by the animosity of the press—animosity often cutting, always impassioned—and by the bad faith of English writers, the injuries addressed by them to the late Tzar having deeply wounded the national feeling through its devotion to that sovereign."

In dire bereavements, God knows we have been wounded to the quick! As to the other accusations against us, let us hold out a hand to be shaken, in token that we seek forgiveness, and by our sincere sympathy for them in their present momentous undertaking, show that we are willing to forget all by-gones in our admiration of their

noble resolve to emancipate their people at all risks, and thus inscribe their names in red letter on the page of progress, as the enactors of the grandest event of this, the most enlightened age of the Christian world.

THE END.

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